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THE
RIVAL DRAGOONS:
OR,
THE LOYAL SCOUTS.

BY
COLONEL C. DUNNING CLARK

LONDON :
THE GENERAL PUBLISHING COMPANY,
280, STRAND, W.C.

THE
RIVAL DRAGOONS;
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CHAPTER I.

UNWELCOME VISITORS.

TEN British dragoons, with a lieutenant at their head, went down the Camden-road at a brisk trot, their sabres rattling in the steel scabbards, their rowels red with spurring, and their gaudy uniforms splashed and travel-stained. The leader was a man yet young, perhaps in the neighbourhood of thirty, with a handsome face, flashing black eyes, and an aristocratic air. Contempt of the people he had come to fight against showed itself in his face whenever they passed any of the country people, who, for the most part, showed a sturdy independence, and passed the troopers with erect head and scornful looks. The lieutenant was glittering in gold lace and bullion, expressing a foppishness in his dress and bearing only to be seen in the British army. But, in spite of all this, there was little doubt that he was a good soldier, for his figure was well set and shapely, and he sat his horse with ease and grace.

"Halt!" he said. The dragoons drew bridle, and sat on their horses like graven images, facing steadily to the front.

"Sergeant Swainson."

A stalwart, battle-scarred veteran in the front saluted.

"You know where this rebel resides?"

"Yes, sir," replied the sergeant.

"We must be near it now."

"It lies just beyond the hill in front, lieutenant."

"Very good; point out the house when we reach the crest of the hill."

The sergeant saluted again and took his place, and at the order "forward: trot," the party was once more in motion, moving forward, until they reached the crest of a hill overlooking a handsome plantation, about an eighth of a mile below.

"That is the place, lieutenant," said the sergeant.

The officer nodded in response, and the whole party dashed on until they reached an avenue of oaks barred from the main pathway by a large gate. A small negro boy, who had been lying in the sun near the gate, sprung to his feet at the sight of the soldiers and was about to run, when he was brought to a standstill by a levelled pistol, in the hand of the lieutenant.

"Stop where you are, my lad," he said. "I should be very sorry to spoil so fine a piece of property as yourself, but if you try to run you will be shot."

"Oh, Lordy!" gasped the boy. "Wha' for you shoot me, massa sojer?" I nebber do notting 'tall.'

"You keep quiet and answer my questions and it will be all right. Is this Colonel Fletcher's plantation?"

"Iss, mass."

"Is the colonel at home?"

"Dunno, massa hosifer; dunno nuffin' 'bout

"Bah: we waste time. Open that gate, you sooty scoundrel, and be quick about it."

The boy proceeded to obey, but in a very laz manner, until warned by the gathering wrath in the officer's face, when he set the gate wide open and the soldiers rode in.

"I go tell massa you come, sar," said the boy turning to dart away.

"Hold on, my boy. You needn't announce us, you will be so kind. We can get on without your help."

"No trouble 'tall, massa. I like 'em; make Pomp spry. Massa Jack, he say I lazzy cooter half de time."

"Stay here," replied the lieutenant. "Sergeant take five men and secure the side and back entrances. I will take care of the front."

As they rode up to the mansion, the party divided, and while four men remained with the lieutenant the rest rode round to secure the doors at the rear and sides. The officer saw a number of black servants scattering in various directions as they rode up, but none of them entered the house. He dismounted at the front, and ran up to the great oaken door which formed the main entrance, and rapped lustily. There was a confused sound within the house, and in a moment the door was cautiously opened, and a black face peeped out.

"Come, open the door, aunty," said the soldier testily. "Don't keep us waiting."

"What you want?" demanded the woman not very respectfully.

"Where is your master?"

"Massa ain't here," she said.

“Your mistress, then.”

“S’pose you send y’ur name up; that’s the way gemmen allus do in *dis* house.”

“Very good; your lesson in politeness is a capital one. Say to your master, if he is at home and to your mistress if he is not, that Lieutenant Arthur Verney, of the —th dragoons, wishes to see the master of the house.”

“What is the trouble, Sarah?” said a sweet voice. “Ah! British soldiers! What do they want here?”

The speaker had come out of a side door into the hall, and now advanced, and the officer stared at her in open-mouthed surprise. He had expected to see an awkward country girl; instead he saw a handsome lady, more beautiful than any he had ever seen. A stately brunette, with a regal face, tastefully attired in floating Indian muslin, and looking at him with a haughty wonder which abashed him, much as he had been taught to look down upon the people of Carolina.

“Well, sir,” she said haughtily, “may I ask your name?”

“Lieutennnt Verney, of the —th dragoons,” he replied, saluting her in a graceful manner. “I am sorry to be forced to intrude, but—”

“Will you state your business, sir?” she said, coldly.

“I wish to see Colonel Fletcher.”

“Indeed! may I ask your business with him?”

“I am not at liberty to state that, miss,” he replied.

“Let me see the colonel, and my business with him will be quickly accomplished.”

“Is it necessary for a lieutenant in the British service to bring such a guard with him upon a visit to a gentleman? May I ask by what authority you intrude here?”

“By authority of Lord Rawdon, commandant in the South.”

“I thought so. The minions of the king must have their underlings to do their master’s work. Let me say t’at my father is not here, and even if he were he would not be likely to wish to see you, with your present companions.”

“You think proper to insult me, Miss Fletcher,” cried Verney, angrily, “and I have no redress from a lady. You refuse to tell Colonel Fletcher that I am here.”

“I repeat that he is not in the house, at present,” she answered.

“When will he return?”

“I should not inform you, if I knew. Man, do you ask a daughter to betray her father to your hands? I know you and your errand, minion of a despotic king. You are one of those ever ready to do the dirty work of your superiors, and endeavour to rivet the chains upon the necks of a gallant people. I have seen my native State in the dust, overrun by a hireling soldiery, her brave men shot down like dogs or laid in chains, her fairest spots made a desolation and ruin by you and such as you, and you expect me to aid you; me, the daughter of a Carolinian!”

“You are bold, Miss Fletcher,” he gasped, biting his lips.

“I would that the service would permit the women of the South to take arms in defence of the nation; they would do what they could.”

“Heaven avert the time!” he said, laughing. “If that time should come the power of the king would be in greater jeopardy than the arms of the brave men of whom you speak have been able to place it in. But, enough of this; I am here to take possession of this estate, sequestrated for the treason of the

owner, and to arrest him if possible. I have been credibly informed that he is here, and you must excuse me if I doubt your word so much as to order a search made in and about the house."

"It shall never be done, while I live," she gasped. "This house has been the home of our family for over half a century, and I will not see it polluted by the feet of the soldiers of the king."

"It must be done," he said—"peacefully if you will, forcibly if we must. Let me beg you to consider that I must do my duty, and do not oblige me to use force."

She paused a moment, her hands opening and closing convulsively.

"I give you my word that my father is not in the house."

"It is not enough. A daughter would be pardoned if she told a falsehood to save a father from captivity. No, Miss Fletcher, this search must be made and at once, but I promise that not an article shall be injured or taken away. Indeed, my business here is to see to that."

"I have not the power to resist you, but I wish a few files of Marion's men were here, to dust the jackets of your proud dragoons."

"They should be met, Miss Fletcher," said the officer, laying his hand upon his sword-hilt. "I do not deny that these ragged thieves fight well, considering the means at their disposal."

"What did you call them, thieves? That sounds well from one of Rawdon's underlings."

"Perdition! Miss Fletcher, you will drive me too far. I have no desire to do more than my duty, but you must be careful what you say. Excuse me if I call in some of my men."

"The house is at your disposal. If you require

me for anything, I shall be in this room. Leave some articles of household furniture, if you can consistently."

"Do you take us for robbers?"

"Yes," she replied, briefly, stepping into the room and closing the door after her.

"The tongues of these Carolina women do us more injury than the swords of the men," muttered Verney. "I have never been so lashed since I was born. Here, Corporal Dodd. Leave Stark and Johnson to guard the door, and come in with Phillips."

The corporal and the private entered the hall, and the lieutenant stepped to the rear door and ordered in two more men, and with these began the search of the house. A negro boy was quickly caught and taken as a guide, and they passed rapidly through the lower part of the house, which was furnished with the taste and elegance so common among the gentry of Carolina at that day. Once or twice Verney passed through the room where Miss Fletcher sat, but she did not notice him, but sat at her harp, playing snatches of well-known "rebel" airs, which nearly drove him mad. The search through the lower part of the house was not successful, and they passed up the great middle staircase to the upper rooms. At this moment a negro girl stole into the room.

"Oh, missee, missee. Dey cotch him, sartin, suah. Pomp say massa Ed Forrest comin' fro' the plantation, and he be catched."

"Get Pomp out as quickly as you can, and warn him to keep away. Why will he come at this time?" she cried, starting to her feet.

"Massa Ed no 'fraid," said the girl. "He eat up two, free, seben sojer feller, you gib him a chaince."

"What can he do against so many? Go quickly and send Pomp to warn him."

The girl hurried away, and Margaret Fletcher, springing up the staircase, found the soldiers searching the upper rooms, and just pausing before a closed door.

"That is my grandmother's room, an old lady, paralyzed by disease. I beg you, Lieutenant Verney, as you are a gentleman, not to attempt to enter. It might be her death. I give you my word of honour as a lady, that no one else is there."

"At least open the door, so that I can look in."

She opened the door softly and he just glanced in and signed to her to close the door. An old woman who was seated near the window looked up in surprise.

"Go on with your search, sir, said Margaret. "When you have finished, let me know."

"I will do so, Miss Fletcher," he said, bowing as she passed in and closed the door.

"What is it, Margaret?" gasped the old lady. "What are all these noises in the house?"

"British soldiers, grandmother. They are searching for my father. Thank heaven, he is not here. Ah! there is Ned now. How can he be so rash?"

At a distance of half a mile from the house a horseman was seen crossing the fields, leaping hedges and fences with the ease of a gallant rider, and heading toward the house. Nearer them a figure on foot was stealing along in the shelter of the bushes, aiming to head him off. This was Pomp, going out to intercept him. The boy was running with all his speed, looking over his shoulder fearfully. At this moment a window was raised below them, and the voice of Verney was heard.

"Look there sergeant, across the fields. Do you

see that horseman clearing the hedge? After him, and take him at all hazards."

The words were scarcely spoken when she heard the rattling of sabres, and directly after Sergeant Swainson sprung into view, followed by three of the dragoons. They had only caught sight of the horseman for a moment as he rose above the hedge, and now he was lost from sight to them, although both Verney and Margaret could see him from the windows at which they were stationed. He was now in an open field and was coming on rapidly, while Pomp was straining every nerve to cut him off. But the boy, in his fear of the dragoons, had taken so wide a circuit, there was danger that he would not be in time. The dragoons, shielding themselves behind the hedge, rode briskly towards a gap a little further up, and as they cleared it they saw the horseman in the next field beyond, where he had halted at the wild shouts of Pomp.

"Look out, dar; look out, dar, Massa Ed," yelled the boy. "Dragons, dragons!" (Dragoons.)

The distance was so great that the young man was bewildered, and while trying to make out the words of the boy, he saw the foremost dragoon clear the fence at a bound, and land in the field, not three hundred yards distant. Margaret saw him whirl his horse suddenly, as he detected the odds against him, and deliberately head him at a thick hedge over five feet high, and go over it like a deer. Pomp, having done all he could, dropped into the ditch, and crawling for some distance, made for the wood upon the dead run, for he knew that it was not safe for him to show himself at the plantation-house after what had occurred. The dragoons, seeing their prey before them, shouted to him to turn, but stedfast at the first leap he made so easily. However

they found low places in the hedge, and went over in close pursuit. By this time Verney and the rest of the dragoons were in the saddle, in two parties riding hard to cut the hunted man off. He rode nobly, glancing over his shoulder from time to time to note the relative distance from his pursuers, and to calculate his chances of escape. Before him the plantation was much cut up by hedges and ditches, very difficult to cross with anything except a hunter. Margaret feared for him, and stood with dilated eyes and clasped hands, watching him.

“ My brave Edwin ; gallant fellow ! How it must go to his heart to be forced to fly from the red-coats ! ” That Verney rides well — I will say that for him. Ah ! he is taken ; he cannot escape ! ”

And, indeed, it seemed as if the gallant horseman had fallen into a trap from which he could not extricate himself.

CHAPTER II

CROSSING STEEL.

THE young man did not appear to feel any great fear, although his situation had a new peril. What was this ? A body of armed men, who, by their dress and accoutrements, seemed to be loyalist riflemen, had emerged from the woods on the other side of the plantation, and catching sight of the hunted man, rode out in all directions, heading him off, uttering ferocious shouts. Well might he draw bridle and rein back from this new enemy, for they were a portion of the band of the notorious Cunningham, distinguished for their manifold atrocities as the “ Loyal Scouts.” Even Huck, that infamous **Tory**, had not done as much evil as William Cunningham and his villainous associates. Forrest did not hesitate a moment, for he saw that his escape

was cut off in front; and wheeling quickly, he rode back at his first pursuers, who were now close at hand. As he neared them, a sabre flashed in his right hand, while his left held a double-barrelled pistol, whose long bright barrel gleamed in the sun.

Sergeant Swainson was his first opponent, a wary old soldier who had fought under the banner of Great Britain for many years. He caught a glimpse of flashing steel, heard the hard breathing of the war steed, and saw a terrible blow descending. His sabre was raised to avert the blow, but so fierce was it that his sword was cleft asunder like a reed, and he measured his length upon the sod. Two other dragoons flung themselves in the way, but the gallant youth rode at them furiously, and, as he came on, the first horse and man went down, the animal shot through the head. The other man drew rein irresolutely, awed by the commanding presence of the Whig, but before he could turn, the gigantic black horse was upon him, riding him down like a whirlwind. Horse and man rolled over and over upon the grass, and Edwin Forrest was away, with a shout of triumph, clearing the sunken fence in front of him with a stag-like leap. His enemies were now behind him, but Verney and another dragoon were close upon his haunches, their hands gripping their sword-hilts fiercely, and their eyes blazing with the ardour of battle and the desire to avenge their fallen comrades.

Forrest, glancing over his shoulder, saw that Verney was gaining upon him at every stride, for he was admirably mounted upon a fine hunter, a cross between the thoroughbred and the Arabian. Forrest set his teeth and dashed on, hoping to put a greater distance between him and the trooper who followed before he turned on the officer. The last fence was a rasper, five feet high, with a ditch upon the opposite

side. The Whig cleared it, and turning in his saddle saw that Verney had followed him bravely, and was safe, but the trooper, essaying to do the same, was entangled in the bushes and fell into the ditch with a crash. Forrest gave utterance to a triumphant shout and darted back, and the next moment crossed swords with the young dragoon.

Up to this time he had trusted to mere power of muscle and the weight of his horse, but he felt from the moment his blade hissed against that of Verney that he had work to do.

Each man had his horse well in hand, and fought warily, ready to take advantage of the least opening. Twice Forrest had an opportunity for a blow, but dared not take advantage of it, for he felt that if he made a mistake he was doomed. He had to do with a man who loved fighting for fighting's sake. His eyes gleamed, his cheek flushed, and his whole force was thrown into his arm. Forrest was a keen swordsman, and he felt a sort of mad delight in meeting a man worthy of his steel.

"By heaven!" cried Verney, as they paused a moment with their swords locked together. "You deserve to escape, but I must have the honour of capturing so gallant a soldier. Surrender and take good quarter."

"Surrender! Never, Englishman! Look to yourself."

"Fight bravely then, for bright eyes are on us, and he who wins shall best deserve her regards. Parry that!"

He suddenly disengaged his sword, and made a rapid thrust, and Forrest felt himself touched in the left shoulder. He repaid the stroke by another equally effective, and nothing saved the life of the soldier but a steel ring which was let into his cap.

As it was, flames seemed to dance before his eyes and he reeled dizzily in the saddle. Recovering his seat by a mighty effort of the will, he played cautiously for a moment to recover himself, before renewing his attack. He dared not thrust again, for he knew that his opponent was on the alert, and would take deadly advantage of every opening.

Although little time had been taken in the fight, thus far, Forrest could hear the rapid beat of coming hoofs, and knew that not a moment was to be lost, if he would escape. No knight-errant of the olden time ever wielded the sword more gallantly than he, and Margaret's heart swelled with pride as she saw him dealing so well with one of the best swordsmen in the English army. She had heard of Arthur Verney before, as a gallant soldier, and one little likely to take an unfair advantage; he was reputed as nearly the best fencer in Charleston. And here was a young man, bred in Carolina, not only holding his own against him but getting the best of him in the encounter. She had seen him surrounded by foes and with almost superhuman valour beating and forcing his way through, and now, weary with a hard ride, and after a desperate struggle, she could see that he was more than a match for Verney. The struggle had taken place under her window and she saw it all, and certainly Forrest did not fight less bravely because she looked on.

"They come, Edwin!" she cried. "Make haste or you will be taken."

Forrest heard her voice, and began an attack against which Verney, yet dizzy from the last blow, could not defend himself. His sword was beaten from his grasp and he was forced out of the saddle, sinking faint and bleeding to the earth. Forrest leaped down and turning his own horse loose,

bounded into Verney's saddle, and was off like the wind, just as the first of his enemies cleared the fence. Margaret saw him thunder past the house and waved him a farewell as he flew by, followed by two or three men whose horses had not yet given way under the terrible trial they had endured. Margaret ran to the front of the house and could see at a glance that there was little chance of their overtaking him, and sinking on her knees uttered fervent thanksgiving to God, who had saved her gallant young lover in his dire extremity. Then she rose and hurried down to the lower part of the house just as the band of Cunningham began to hurry by, their eyes gleaming with passion. At the door she met Sergeant Swainson, looking faint and weary, and covered with dust.

"You will excuse us, miss, but we must have a bed for the lieutenant and another wounded man. Thank your rebel friend for it."

"The house is yours," said Margaret, heartily. "Even the enemies of my country, when wounded, are welcome here. Send that black boy to me."

A negro came in, his eyes dilated with wonder, for he had witnessed the fray from the safe shelter of a hedge.

"Go to Sarah, Cato," commanded his mistress, "and tell her to prepare a bed in the blue chamber for the wounded officer. After that the kitchen bedroom must be made ready for another wounded man. Have you a surgeon, here, sergeant?"

"I believe Cunningham has one."

"Very well. I expect you to see to it that none of the infamous scouts come into this house. If they had their way they would not leave one stone upon another in my father's house."

"The mansion is in my charge, miss," replied the

sergeant, saluting respectfully. "You may be certain that I will allow no excesses in it, though I have no doubt they will insist upon being furnished with rations."

"Do you think they will overtake the man they are after?"

"I'm afraid not. He has taken the lieutenant's horse, and I don't think there is one in the country which can equal him."

"I hope you were not badly hurt, sergeant. I saw you fall quite heavily."

"Heavily? I should think so! I have not had such a tumble since I first handled steel. My sword broke in my hand, but I thought I was struck by lightning. May I ask who this gentleman was, your father?"

"Oh, no; I thought you were aware that my father is not a young man."

"I didn't have time to look," replied the sergeant, laughing. "Ah, here comes the lieutenant."

Four men appeared, carrying the insensible body of the lieutenant between them. His forehead was streaked with blood, where the steel circlet had been forced into it by the blow of the Whig, and the blood was dropping from a wound in the side. His cap had been taken off, and the ghastly pallor of his face was more apparent in contrast with the blood upon it.

The sight of even an enemy so severely wounded aroused the sympathy of Margaret, and she led the way to the room which had been set apart for the injured man. He was laid upon a soft bed, and the surgeon, a hard-featured, but comical-visaged Scotchinan, at once cleared the room of every one except the sergeant; the lieutenant was stripped, washed, and then the surgeon looked at the wounds, muttering to himself.

"How is he, doctor?" asked Swainson, who had a sincere regard for his leader. "Will he die?"

"Probably—when his time comes."

"Don't be ill-natured, doctor. I wish to be able to make my report."

"Report that he has a flesh-wound in the shoulder—slight—and a severe contusion upon the head, the result of a sabre-cut—result, doubtful. Now stand aside and let me work. I have been bothered enough wi' babblers and incompetent parsons to drive a man mad."

Still grumbling, the Scotchman went to work skilfully and well, and in an incredibly short space of time the wounds were dressed, and the patient comfortable.

"Now, he is coming to himself," growled the doctor. "Understand aye thing, sergeant. Let him excite himself and he will die. Keep him quiet and he will live. Now, where is this other wounded man? Dom it, why will men gang deliberately to wark to deface the emage of the Creator, when they know vera weel that the doctors will ha' enoc to do wi' purely natural causes? Here, blackee, where is this hashed soldier?"

The negro boy led the way for the irate physician to the lower floor, where they were met by the mistress of the house.

"Is he better, doctor?" she asked.

"Now see til that!" grumbled Esculapius. "Better? Of coarse he is better! I have not taken my degrees at Edinburgh not to ken my beesness. But, let me tell ye that if I see you in the room, I shall tussel ye oot wi' vera little ceremony. You may be certain of that."

"Whom have I the honour of addressing, sir?"

"Doctor James Campbell, M.D.—a man who claims

to understand medicine a little, and who will *not* be interfered wi'."

"I am surprised to see a man of your class connected with a band like that of Cunningham."

"Now listen til that! As if it was onybody's beesness except my own, wi' what branch of the service I chose to connect mysel'. If you must know, I took this position because this class of men give me plenty of practice, and I have no scruples in cutting and carving a lot of unmitigated ruffians for whom hanging is only too gude. Now be so kind as to get oot of my way, for I have beesness to attend to."

The doctor pushed rudely by her, and hurried after the negro, who was waiting for him; and Margaret looked after him in mixed surprise and amazement. He was a queer-looking specimen of humanity, and certainly not much of a knight errant. He was shortly engaged, with the assistance of a private or two, in setting the leg of the trooper who had fallen at the last fence, keeping up a running fire of commentaries as he laboured.

"Ha! how do you like that, my mon?" he would say, as he pressed the shattered bones into their places. "It's a bed of roses, isn't it? I have not the least doubt you wull enjoy yoursel' hugely for the next six weeks. Gi' me that splint, ye block-head! No, not that, the other, you scoundrel! The service is going til the deevil, and no questions asked. By St. Andrew, if I had my way, I'd hang ivery mon connected with this affair, and give *that* audacious rebel a colonel's commission. He deserves it, and that is more than I can say of half the commissioned officers in the service. The other splint. Turn it, turn it, ye thick-headed ful! Ye laddies always give anything butt-end first, even to your rifles.

The idea that an infernal rebel should have caused this trouble. I hope he will get away, and if he is hurt, I'll attend to him and save a valuable life. There, gi' me the bandage. That's right, numbscull! It's enough to make a man throw up his diploma and retire in disgust. Steady now, don't tremble as if a rebel were after ye. He is far enough off by this time, I'll go bail. None of those lazy snails could stop him. Gi' me the needle! Confound your stupid head! why don't you thread it?"

The soldier, disconcerted by the manner of the doctor, obeyed the order as well as he could; and the surgeon sewed the edges of the bandages with a neatness only to be seen in professional persons. The patient noted that, in spite of his blustering manner, this queer surgeon handled the broken limb tenderly, and that he was never hurt except through the rough handling of his comrade. The work was done at last, and the doctor glanced at his patient with a curious mixture of pride and aversion.

"There; now just flounce that about as much as you like, and you will have a happy time. Keep it quiet, and you will have a chance to smash it again in a month. Take your choice."

At this moment a female's voice was heard, uttering a cry of anger and alarm. The doctor started up in a rage.

"And I've got another patient under my hand. I'll have the scoundrel's life, whoever he is!"

And with these words he darted from the room, in the direction of the noise.

CHAPTER III.

THE DOCTOR MILITANT.

As the surgeon had left Margaret in the hall, the Tories who had pursued Edwin Forrest came troop-

ing back in a raging humour, for they had found it impossible to overtake the fleet hunter of the Whig, who had gained the shelter of the "big swamp," in which they did not think proper to pursue. The leader of the party, a sombre, dark-browed fellow, whose associates had earned for him a terrible reputation along the plains of Carolina, at once dismounted and made his way into the house without an invitation. Margaret sprung forward in a fearless manner, and faced him.

"Infamous wretch!" she cried. "What do you want here?"

The ruffian paused and directed a scowling look at her, which would have caused most women to tremble, but the girl before him was not easily frightened. The Fletcher blood was up, and she met his glance by a look of scorn.

"Curse your proud race," hissed Cunningham. "All the Fletcher blood, big and little, man and woman, have been taught to scorn all who have less money and rank than they. But the time has come when the poor of Carolina shall put their feet upon the necks of your Pinckneys, Rutledges and Fletchers, and all who rebel against our good king. I am Major William Cunningham, of the Loyal Scouts. Do you know me now, girl?"

"Know you! Who has not heard the name of Cunningham, and learned to connect it with all that is base and cruel? A hundred families pray night and morning that God will mete out vengeance on you according to your works. Are you satisfied that I know you?"

"Ten thousand demons! Do you want me to burn this nest of treason to the ground?" he cried.

"Nest of treason! You speak falsely, Cunningham, and you know it. The Fletchers are loyal, not

to an imbecile king, but to the land which has nourished them. A few base-hearted men, who have no right to claim the name of Carolinians, have joined with the invaders to put down the gallant people of this State, but they are few in number, and the dregs of the people, and among these *you* are chief. Stand back; leave the house! You shall not pollute it with your tread."

"You do not know the devil you are raising, Miss Margaret Fletcher. I am all-powerful in this section, and I will not leave a stick or stone upon the Fletcher plantation if you drive me too far. In the meantime, I will quarter my men here and take possession."

Margaret made a step forward, her eyes blazing with anger, and before the Tory could lift a finger a pistol was at his breast, held by a firm hand.

"I would not have your blood upon my hand, Tory, but if you advance a step further, you are dead."

"Would you murder me?" he gasped, falling back in alarm.

"Murder you? I do not think it would be a crime to rid the earth of such a monster. I stand here to defend an honoured house; let the consequences be what they may, I will do it."

By this time a dozen of the scouts had crowded into the hall, their sombre clothing unrelieved by a single spot of white, and their bearded faces and burly frames filling up the end of the hall. Growls of discontent could be heard. "Down with the Fletchers;" "Death to the brood of the Whig colonel;" "Burn the house about their ears." Margaret heard them, and although her cheek grew paler, the finger which lay so lightly on the trigger of the pistol did not tremble.

“ You do not know what you are doing, Miss Fletcher,” said Cunningham. “ You may kill me, but the vengeance my men would take for the deed I dare not name. Put up the weapon and stand aside.”

“ I will not !” she replied, still covering his breast with the weapon. “ Take care what you do !”

“ I will report this conduct to the commander-in-chief.”

“ Do so ; I doubt if ever he will give countenance to your conduct. I have friends even among the English, rebel though I am.”

“ Very well, then, I will leave the house, but you shall hear from me again, you may be sure. Out of the hall, men and wait in the avenue.”

The men began to move slowly out, muttering among themselves, and the major turned as if to follow, but, seeing Margaret lower the pistol, he made a single agile leap and seized her by the wrist, and waist, and shouted to one of the men to come and wrench the pistol from her hand. One of the rascals did so, and Margaret was struggling in the brutal grasp of the Tory.

“ Ha ! ha ! ha ! my proud beauty ! You thought Bill Cunningham was awed by your threats, did you ? Now for my revenge. Your lips are sweet, and if I rob them of a little of their bloom, there will be a fund of richness left.”

She uttered frantic cries for help, and he kissed her lips again and again, laughing loudly as he did so.

“ To tame the pride of the Fletchers,” he said, “ I will do anything, everything. Do you not see that I return Gospel measure ? A kiss for a blow ; ha ! ha ! ha !”

It was at this moment that the cries of the girl

reached the doctor in the room of the wounded man, and awakened his rage.

Margaret was still struggling with the villain, when there came a panting sound, the rush of feet, and a heavy blow delivered with professional skill; then the Tory was rolling over and over on the floor of the hall clutching at the carpet in vain, while over him stood the irate doctor, his countenance inflamed by rage.

“There!” he roared. “Ye may be higher in rank in the service than I, but I’ll be hanged if I am going to have all this noise in a house where I ha’ patients. Here, you scum of creation, get out of this house, every mon Jack of you, or I’ll kill the whole party.”

It was evident that the Loyal Scouts had a wholesome fear of the doctor, for they rushed out at once, leaving him with Margaret and the major, who raised himself on his elbow, and steadfastly regarded the pair.

“Dinna look at me in that way, Major Cunningham!” roared the doctor, furiously. “Ye ken your remedy, if you don’t like my little ways. I acknowledge that I am peculiar in some respects, and one of my peculiarities ye have just noted. What the deevil do you mean by making such a din in the house?”

“You have struck me, Doctor Campbell,” said the major, rising slowly.

“It rather runs in my mind that I did. Ay, I struck you, laddie, and now what do you propose to do about it?”

“We shall see, sir. I am not the man to receive an insult calmly, as you shall find to your cost. I shall remember this.”

“Ye ken where the buckle of your sword belt is

situated, major," said Campbell, quietly. "I am ready to gie you the satisfaction of a gentleman at any time, although I ha' thought I never would fight a scoundrel. But as you bear the king's commission, I will overlook that. In my country, mon, they don't allow anyone to insult an unprotected female. Now leave the house, of which I claim charge. It is a hospital for the present, and I won't have you in it."

"Neither will I," said Sergeant Swainson, who had just come in. "I am in charge of this house by virtue of special orders to Lieutenant Verney, who has ordered me to take charge, and Major Cunningham must leave."

"Where are your orders?" demanded Cunningham. "Let me see them."

"Lieutenant Verney has charge of his own instructions. My orders are by word of mouth. If you doubt my word, you can see the lieutenant, who is now much better."

"No, he can't!" replied the doctor. "I'll no' have my patients meddled wi'. Gang aboot your beesness, sir, and I'll tak' care of this house."

"My men must have rations," growled the major.

"That's but fair. I can answer for Miss Fletcher that she will do all in her power to fill your men's haversacks. I suppose you have plenty of cold bacon and bread, miss?"

"The servants have orders to prepare rations for eighty men," replied Margaret, exchanging a defiant glance with Cunningham. "I think that will be enough. And now I must insist that this man leave the house."

"I am going, my lady, I am going," said Cunningham. "But, be pleased to remember what my name is, and that I never forget nor forgive an insult."

"Neither do I, sir. I have friends who will never rest until they have avenged the wrong you have done me to-day."

"Captain Forrest, for instance."

"Edwin Forrest has proved himself to-day what you are not—a gallant man."

"Forrest," said the doctor, starting violently. "Is that the name of the fellow who upset the dragoons so finely to-day?"

"I did not mean to tell it, but that is his name."

"The name smacks much o' the land o' cakes from which I hail," said the doctor, laughing. "Scots stick together like brothers, and I would na be surprised to hear that he is of that canny nation. I was thinking that he had a braw way of handling his legs and arms, the bonny cheil. There, I'm awa' to my Scotch. Ye'll notice that when I get excited I forget my English, Miss Fletcher. *Are you going, Major Cunningham?*"

"I claim the same right as other officers—quarters in this house."

"After insulting its mistress! No, that cannot well be. If you had behaved as a gentleman I have no doubt Miss Fletcher would be happy to gi' you a place at her table."

Cunningham cast a fierce look at the group and strode out, leaving them together.

"He's a fearsome cheil," remarked Campbell. "I mun look to mysel' or have a dirk in my back some dark night for knocking him down."

"I have to thank you for preserving me from insult, Doctor Campbell," said Margaret; "I shall not forget it."

"Hoot awa, cheil! The rascalion made sic a din amang my patients, that I couldna bear it. I'd knock down the commander-in-chief for the same!"

"I believe you would, doctor;" declared Swainson, laughing.

"Supper is served, Missie Margaret;" announced a black servant.

"I hope you will do me the favour of joining me at the meal, doctor," said Margaret. "Also the sergeant, if you do not object."

"Dinna fear it, lassie. I'm not aye of the kind to relish my meal the less because a lad who is but a sergeant is taking his meal at the same table. Ye are welcome, sergeant."

They followed the negro into the supper-room, where a bountiful feast was spread, and Margaret sent a servant to inquire whether the lieutenant felt well enough to join them at the table or would prefer to have something sent up. The man came back to say that the officer was not quite well, but would try to join them in the parlour after supper. They then took seats at the table, the doctor carving, and Margaret superintending the coffee-urn and attending to the wants of her guests with a grace entirely her own.

"I'm afraid you have made an enemy to-night doctor," said the sergeant, as he took his plate from the black waiter. "I did not like the look the major gave you when he went out."

"Faith, you may be right, my good sergeant," said Campbell, quietly. "Two spoonsful of sugar, Miss Fletcher. I've a sweet tooth for coffee, I tul ye. As for my lad, the major, I'm thinking I'll have to invite him to a supper of steel, if he has the spirit to meet me."

"Not on my account, Doctor Campbell," protested Margaret. "I have friends enough to fight my battles."

"Wha' doubts it? A bonny lassie like ye—excuse

the freedom of an auld Scot—mun have plenty of lads ready to risk their bodies for your sake. I only wish that the major had been in Arthur Verney's place this day. I doubt our Whig friend would not have let him off so easily. May I ask ye a question or two, Miss Fletcher, in reference to this same Whig?"

"I can answer nothing which will put him in danger."

"I'd not ask it; and our friend, the sergeant, is not the man to take advantage of a private conversation, I am sure."

"You only do me justice, doctor. I won't say but if we meet again in a fight I'd try to be even with him for the tumble he gave me to-day, but I wish him no ill. I like a brave man, whichever side he fights on, and if I am any judge, he's no coward, that Forrest."

"Nobly said, sergeant! If all Englishmen spoke as you do, this war would never have degenerated into one of mutual retaliation. I will tell you who Edwin Forrest is, doctor, since you wish to know.

"Twelve years ago he came to Charleston upon an English ship, in which he had sailed from some port in Scotland. He was then a mere lad—perhaps fourteen years of age. The captain knew nothing of him, except that he had a Scotch pronunciation, and had come on board just before they sailed, and seemed in a hurry to leave. He was an active lad, and made himself very useful on board ship, and was liked by everyone. My father, who was part-owner of the vessel, took a fancy to him, and for some years he was employed by him, until, just at the beginning of the war, he was made captain. About that time, an old bachelor uncle of mine, who loved Edwin, died, and left him his estate upon certain conditions. It is the next estate to ours, the Petrie property—now in the hands of a Tory—bought from the English by

time-serving and blatant loyalty. I need not say that Major Cunningham's family are the owners."

"Probably our Scotch laddie will call him til a 'restitution large' one of these fine days," suggested the doctor. "The lad never said anything about his family to you?"

"Not much. He has always claimed that they were of good family, and that Forrest is not his right name."

"I know a good many Forrests in the West of Scotland, and if he comes of that race, there is no better blood anywhere. Ay, ye may fill the cup again, miss; it's seldom we get such coffee in the Loyal Scouts. I don't wonder that Cunningham is so hot after Forrest, since he holds a sequestrated estate. A bit more of the chicken, sergeant?"

"If you please," replied Swainson, allowing himself to be liberally helped.

"What sort of a looking lad is this Forrest? I had a sort of dissolving view of him, but he rode too fast for taking a portrait," said the doctor.

"He is called a fine-looking young man," replied Margaret. "Now, if you will excuse me, gentlemen, I will leave you to your wine, for I have duties to perform."

"A moment, Miss Fletcher," pleaded the Scotchman, as the servant filled their glasses. "Let me drink your health, for though our politics differ, we can never be enemies. Your health."

Margaret acknowledged the politeness, and rose to leave the room; and the doctor applied himself to the sherry, which was superb; and the sergeant, not so refined in his tastes, contented himself with the brandy-flask, which stood at his elbow. They were getting quite convivial, and the doctor was on his feet to propose the health of the man who had the

taste to lay in such celestial liquors, when a tumult outside, the blare of a trumpet, and the clash of steel, announced an enemy, and the sergeant sprung for his weapons and rushed out into the open air, shouting to his men. The doctor coolly stepped to the window, threw it up, and looked out upon a wild scene.

CHAPTER IV.

A DISCOMFITED TROOP.

“My friends of the Loyal Scouts are getting the dust beaten out of their jackets,” he muttered.

They were indeed. The whole space in front of the house was filled with armed horsemen engaged in a desperate *melee* with the riders of Cunningham, who had been taken completely by surprise, as irregular troops are apt to be. The fact that they were outside, had made Sergeant Swainson more careless than he would have been under ordinary circumstances, and his men were nearly all in the kitchen where they, being regulars, were better received than the Tories, who were in exceedingly bad odour with the slaves, many of whose friends had been transported to the West Indies through their means. The party which made the attack was a well-mounted though poorly armed force of about sixty, who, however, used their rude sabres with signal effect. Foremost of them, riding down the Tories like a very demon, and slaying all who came within the reach of his powerful arm, rode Edwin Forrest, his eyes full of the ardour of battle, his lip smiling, and the joy of the combat showing itself plainly in his face.

“Down with them!” shouted the young Whig, as he clift the shoulder of a man who threw himself in the way. “Death to the Loyal Scouts!”

Just behind the house was a long rew of negro cabins, and those who were left of the Tories gained the shelter of these, and kept the Whigs at bay. But, as Cunningham glanced along his thin ranks, he ground his teeth furiously, for some of his best men were missing, beaten down by the weapons of the men of Forrest, who paused a moment as the Tories gained the shelter of the negro cabins and looked at their leader for orders. Among those who had escaped to this shelter was Sergeant Swainson and several of his men, and he was trying to induce the "Scouts" to gather, and charge upon their enemies, who, even now, had no more men than Cunningham. But, they had the advantage of having struck the first blow, and demoralised their opponents, and all the persuasion of the sergeant, backed by the threats of Cunningham, could not make them charge.

"Let us get breath," replied a sullen-browed fellow, a sergeant in the "Scouts." "Don't you know that yonder is Ed Forrest's troop, and he is a devil incarnate?"

"What do we care! Cowards, do you fear a set of beggarly Whigs? Oh, that the king should be served by such rascals."

"Good words, master sergeant," growled the man, "or you may have to take a hug with Dick Stanley, and that wouldn't suit you. Ware the hug of the big bear of the Edisto Englishman."

"Let the big bear of the Edisto use his power upon the Whigs rather than boasting of it in the safe shelter of a negro cabin," said Swainson. "Come, we must do something."

"Charge, if you like," replied the man. "Our fellows won't follow your lead; that I know."

The Whigs had placed the house between them

and the negro quarters, to shelter themselves from the fire of the Tories, and leaving the men in charge of his ensign, Captain Forrest leaped from the saddle and hurried into the house, and pushing open the door of the supper-room, looked in. The room was vacant, with the exception of Doctor Campbell, who was seated at the window enjoying a pinch of snuff, and looking out at the Whigs.

"And fine ye done it, lad," he said, quietly. "I'm on the ither side, ye ken, but, by my saul, ye laced the black-coats well."

"Who are you?" demanded Forrest.

"An unworthy disciple of Esculapius, James Campbell by name."

"A non-combatant," said Forrest. "Then I have nothing to do with you, but I would suggest that there is work for you outside."

"Work for the sexton, lad, work for the sexton. The daft chiels who follow you don't gi' the doctors much chance to exercise their skill. Mony a fathom of good rope have you saved this day."

"What do you mean?"

"Saul o' me body, mon, I mean that they laddies were sure to be hung if ye had na' cut them aff in the flower of their youth and beauty. However, I'll gang oot and see what I can do for them."

Forrest went to the door with him and said to his men, "A surgeon, boys; let him pass," and the doctor passed through the ranks, looking critically at the strong-limbed horsemen. He found that the Whigs had not left him much to do. Of twenty men who lay upon the sod sixteen were slain outright, and another was beyond the chance of recovery. The other three men were badly hurt, and by the direction of the doctor, some of the troopers came forward, lifted the wounded men and carried them

into the kitchen. The Whigs had many wrongs to avenge upon the scouts, and it is no wonder that so few of them needed a second blow. Forrest, having seen the doctor about his work, hurried back into the house, where he met Margaret coming down the great staircase. He sprang to her side, and clasped her in his arms, pressing her lips warmly.

“My darling Margaret! This hour repays me for these weary months of separation.”

“My father,” cried Margaret, as she disengaged herself blushingly from his ardent clasp. “Where is he?”

“Safe, dearest, quite safe. I have seen to that. And now let me beg you to retire to a place of safety, for I am about to attack the Tories, and many shots may strike the house. You must go into the cellar.”

“I will not skulk away when you are in danger,” she replied, boldly. “Oh, my brave Edwin, why do you expose yourself so much?”

“How can I do my duty to my country otherwise?” he asked, drawing himself up proudly. “Do not fear for me, Margaret. If I fall, I shall only regret it because a strong arm is taken from the cause, for he dies well who dies bravely. Who is this Scotch doctor?”

“A gallant man, though an odd one,” she replied. “He has rendered me a gallant service to-day.”

“What do you mean?”

She told him quickly of her encounter with the Tory, and the assistance she had received from Dr. Campbell.

“Honour to his old Scotch blood!” said Forrest. “I might have expected it from one of the race of Argyll. Who said that they are always fair and false? It is a base calumny upon a noble race.

must see him, and shake his hand for that brave blow. As for Cunningham, let him look to himself, for he shall repent this deed to his dying hour. And now, let me lead you to a place of safety, for the battle will soon begin."

"Let me stay here, Edwin. I am in no danger, I assure you."

"You may be hit by a stray bullet, and there are men in yonder band base enough to shoot you down. Go into the cellar, as I tell you, and pray for the triumph of my party over the scouts."

"And that you may escape safely. Oh, Edwin, how my heart leaped as I saw you surrounded by enemies, and fighting your way out so gallantly to-day! Once I thought you were gone, and my heart stood still. If you had fallen, as I live I would have killed Cunningham with my own hand."

He caught her to his bosom, kissed her lips again and again, and then led her to the door of the cellar. Three men went to the upper room and brought the old lady to the same place of safety, and then, bidding them farewell, Forrest went back to his troop. He knew that he had no time to spare, for night was coming on, and he must beat the scouts within half-an-hour or not at all.

"Ensign Throop," he cried; "take your troop to the north side of their position and assail them in the rear. When you gain the position near yonder three oaks let your bugle sound a charge, and that will be the signal for me to attack in front. I trust this to you."

The officer saluted, and calling to his troop, consisting of about thirty men, he wheeled about the mansion, out of sight of the Tories, and making a wide detour reached the point aimed at with cut trouble from the Tories, who had not yet plucked

up courage. At the same time the troop of Forrest, who had rifles as well as sabres, began a close fire upon the negro quarters, making it death to the Tories to show their heads. Ten minutes passed when the bugle of Throop was heard, and with wild shouts, the Whigs charged upon both sides. The scouts at once sprung to their saddles, as they had no fire-arms except pistols, and were powerless to return the hailstorm of lead which rattled about their ears. The orders of Cunningham were brief and to the point. "Heel it, boys; meet at the cypress!"

With these words he put spurs to his horse and rushed down the avenue, his men straggling behind according to the power of their horses. Close upon them, dealing blows at every stride, came the band of Forrest, slaying the cowardly wretches as they ran. The tumult rolled down the main road towards the river, and the Tories bade fair to be completely wiped out, when the tramp of many feet was heard, and, turning an angle in the road, the Whigs came suddenly in view of a marching column of redcoats, and drew bridle hastily as the English fell into line, thinking this audacious troop nothing less than the advance guard of an army. Forrest, who led the pursuit, shouted an order to retreat, and before the British could deliver their fire the horsemen had turned an angle in the road and were hurrying back towards Fletcher's.

"I thought the red-coats would be in motion by this time," said Ed, turning to his ensign. "Well, we have given Cunningham a lesson he will not soon forget, and he will take care how he wakes the Edisto boys again. Whose regiment do you think that is?"

"Stewart's, I think. It was lucky for us that Archy Campbell was not with them."

"Nonsense; they have no cavalry which can stand for a moment against ours. There we have them, for their starved and jaded beasts are no match for ours. Ah, there is the doctor again, and a capital old fellow he is, too."

He was bending over a wounded man by the roadside, who was shrieking in agony.

"Hauld yer tongue, ye useless fule," he growled. "Ye may thank your lucky stars it was your shoulder and not your head, for by my saul such a blow might well have cut you in twa. These chiels strike awfu' hard. Deed and they are fearsome laddies."

"Oh, doctor, shall I die?" moaned the man.

"Die; of course ye will, sometime. But keep your courage up, for ye'll e'en die what I call a natural death for a' this hurt."

"What do you call a natural death, doctor?" asked Forrest, laughing.

"Hemp, laddie, hemp!" responded Campbell, without looking up. "Saul o' me body, but I saw ye lift one chiel out of his saddle wi' a blow that might have killed an elephant. Did ye think I have no feelings that ye deface the human frame that gait? Now ye are comfortable, lad, so howl away and I'll go look for a new patient."

"There are those coming who will see to them, doctor. A British force is on the march, half a mile below."

"Many thanks to them. They are the lads that lock the stable after the horse is gone off wi' the thief. I'll go back to the house wi' ye, for ye'll be wanting to see the lassie again before ye ride awa'. Dinna glower at me, mon; I ken what's the trouble when I see it."

They hurried back to the house, where they found the sergeant and five of his men, who had stood their

ground and been taken prisoners, and now stood under guard near the house.

"I'm sorry ye couldna' overtake that chiel who calls himself Cunningham," said the doctor. "I'm thinking ye wad ha' saved me a wairld of trouble if ye only had, for he don't like me, the de'il a bit. Ah, there is Miss Fletcher. Heck! but she's a *bonny lassie*."

"I have net a moment to stay, Margaret," cried Edwin, as he sprung from the saddle and led her into the house. "The British are on the march and I must be off. The house will be in the midst of their lines within an hour, and you will be protected. *Come* in two days to the hollow tree in the woods and *you* shall either see me or hear from me."

"You must not venture into their lines if they pitch them here, Edwin. It would be death to *you* to do so."

"I shall be very careful. Be sure that I will not venture into the lion's jaws without first making it certain that the noble beast will permit me to come out. I don't know what to do with these *prisoners* of mine."

"Are they Tories?"

"My men have not taken any Tory prisoners to-day," said Forrest. "They are useless articles to *lug about*."

"Then set these men free and let them guard the house until the British come up. There is a *wounded officer* here who is in their charge."

"Ha! the one I fought with this morning, Margaret?"

"The same."

"He is a gallant swordsman, whoever he is. Do not let him fall in love with you, that is all. But pshaw! He is certain to do it and the *meth must*

burn his wings in the flame of the candle. There; one kiss, and farewell until we meet again."

"And be careful of yourself, for my sake and the cause," she said, returning his kiss.

"I will promise that. Good-bye, dearest. I must be off, for the English are not far away."

He darted out, bade the doctor a cordial good-bye, and told him that he had concluded not to take any prisoners, bounded into the saddle and rode away at the head of his troop, while the Scotchman looked after him with a strange, intent gaze.

"To think of it," he murmured. "To meet him thus, a gallant soldier, with the brave, handsome face of his race, and I dare not speak to him! The time must come at last."

Margaret had come out, and stood beside him, looking with a shudder at the ghastly forms which lay scattered about, and which the soldiers were picking up one by one, and carrying into the negro quarters until they could be buried.

"War is a terrible business," she said. "God can never forgive those who make it necessary."

"War must be, my dear Miss Fletcher," returned the doctor. "And to a pugnacious old Scotchman, the sight of a brave lad like your Forrest, charging at the head of his men, is a noble sight. We Highlanders are over given to fighting, ye ken weel."

"You like Edwin, then?"

"Ay, I like him weel. He has a noble face, and will not shame the family from whence he sprung. Ah! hear the bugles. Stewart's regiment, I know."

The head of a marching column appeared, and, turning aside from the main road, they camped upon the plantation some distance from the house. Shortly after, a glittering party of horsemen appeared, surrounding the commander, who rode in

the midst. It was quite impossible to say at that distance who they might be; but as they came nearer, Campbell muttered—

“Rawdon, by my soul! What’s *he* after now?”

His question was soon to be answered, for the party entered the great gates and rode up to the mansion.

CHAPTER V.

THE LORD AND THE REBEL SPY.

THE glittering cavalcade stopped a few steps from the verandah, and an *aide* rode out, and removing his hat, saluted Margaret courteously.

“My Lord of Rawdon wishes me to say that he is desirous of making his headquarters in this house while he camps in this vicinity, and would like to see the owner.”

“You may say to Lord Rawdon, that while I do not consider myself a friend to his cause, I will endeavour to make him welcome during the time he may see proper to remain here. In the absence of my father, I am mistress of the house.”

“Can you also find quarters for the staff?” asked the *aide*.

“Certainly; the house is large, as you see, and at his disposal.”

The *aide* turned and rode back to the staff, and made his report. A bevy of black boys, who appeared from various nooks and crannies where they had hidden during the fight, now appeared to take the horses to the stable, and Rawdon and several of his officers approached, and to the surprise of Margaret, Cunningham was among them.

The face of the Tory was bruised and lacerated, and a dark swelling just above the eye showed where the fist of Doctor Campbell had alighted. He

scowled in an ominous manner as he saw his opponent and Margaret, and muttered something in a low tone to Rawdon.

"I have said that I would see you righted, Major Cunningham," replied Rawdon, with a look which savoured strongly of disgust. "In the meantime, let me know whose hospitality I am to claim while we remain here?"

"Colonel William Fletcher is the owner of this house and plantation," replied Margaret, "and I am his daughter."

"As much a rebel as he is," muttered Cunningham, in Rawdon's ear.

The general gave him a look at which he cowered, and turned to Margaret with a sauity of demeanour which he knew so well how to assume, even in the face of an enemy.

"I am sorry to make you trouble," he said, "but we must do many things during a rebellion such as this, which do violence to our own desires. I may remain in this section for a week, and shall, with your permission, which you have so graciously given, make my quarters here, with my staff."

"May I ask you a question, Lord Rawdon?" said Margaret.

The lord bowed and she pointed out Cunningham.

"May I ask if that person belongs to your staff?"

"He does not."

"Would it make any trouble if you were to send him away to find quarters with other officers not on your staff?"

"I do not know that it would, Miss Fletcher. May I ask you why?"

"The reasons are personal ones, mainly that he is the avowed enemy of our family, and has this day insulted me most grossly. Under the circumstances

it would be very unpleasant to have him in the house."

"I can subscribe to that, my lord," said Doctor Campbell. "Knowing the facts I will say that Miss Fletcher only asks justice."

The doctor could speak very pure English when he chose, and it was only under strong excitement that he fell back upon the Scotch dialect.

"Ah, Campbell," said Rawdon with a smile, "are you there? I shall have no difficulty in granting your request. I do not propose to make Major Cunningham an inmate of the house, as he will be busy in reorganizing his scattered troop who were badly used up by that pestilent young rebel, Captain Forrest. But the major says he has some cause of complaint against you."

"A personal matter, my lord. An insult to a lady, whose quarrel I must make my own, and he dare not deny it."

"I see that I can get no justice here, my lord," said Cunningham, boldly, "and with your permission I will return to my troop."

"You may go, sir. I will inquire into this matter, and I assure you that you shall have strict justice."

Cunningham saluted, and reigning back his horse, which the servants, by Margaret's orders, had not removed, he rode back toward the camp, with a ferocious look upon his dark face. Margaret now ushered them into the house, and Rawdon at once seated himself upon a sofa, with a sigh of relief.

"I am an old soldier, Miss Fletcher," he said, "and am so much denied the comforts of a home that such a haven as this is a relief to me. What a pity your father is such a persistent rebel."

"We will not speak of that, my lord, if you will

be so kind," she said. "I honour my father in the course he has taken, and his opinions are mine. If we argue we shall surely fall out."

"My fair foe," responded Rawdon, smiling, "I never quarrel with ladies. If I did I should have my hands full, for the ladies of Carolina are more audacious rebels than the men. While I deeply regret that this should be the case, I always strive to do my duty in such a manner as to give as little offence as possible. I understand that one of my officers, Lieutenant Verney, is lying wounded in this house. How was he hurt?"

"In an attempt to capture the man you stigmatise as an audacious rebel—Captain Edwin Forrest."

"Ah!" said Rawdon, shaking his forefinger playfully at her. "Let me catch him once, that is all. These hard riders make me more trouble than the blacksmith, Greene."

"And yet Greene has troubled you somewhat, my lord," she added naively.

"He is fleet of foot, I will say," replied Rawdon; "I have not been able to catch him."

"I have heard from some quarter that you did catch him, at a place called Hobkirk's Hill," said Margaret, musingly, "and that you were very much in the position of the soldier who caught the Tartar."

"You are incorrigible," said Rawdon, cloaking his anger beneath a smile, for he was even now retreating on account of the staggering blow which the Rhode Island blacksmith had dealt him. "There, there. If you will permit the doctor to show me the way I will see my wounded officer, if he is well enough for a visit."

"He is better, my lord, much better," said Campbell, "and grievously annoyed because he could not take part in the fighting to-day. I will say that the

Loyal Scouts ran like men when the Whigs attacked them."

"What can you expect from irregular troops, doctor?" asked Rawdon. "Lead the way, if you please."

The doctor showed him up the staircase and into Verney's room, who was dressing and nearly ready to come down.

"My dear Arthur," said Rawdon, taking the young officer's hand, "I am glad to hear you are improving. How did it all happen?"

"I met a swordsman who was too much for me, my lord," answered Verney.

"Surely not; it is impossible that a mere rebel should be able to handle a sabre against you."

"Tush, my lord, let us give our enemies credit. He beat me fairly, and I will do him the justice to say that I never crossed swords with his equal. However, I do not say that I give up to him yet, and shall try to meet him again."

"Did you have any difficulty here, Verney?"

"The lady of the house *is* a lady, in every sense of the word. I hear that she has been insulted by this Major Cunningham, and if I had been able to raise a sword I would have called him to account for it."

"Do not let us inquire too closely into the matter, my dear Verney. These irregular troops will do things at which we are forced to wink, but I have sent him back to the camp, and shall see to it that it is put out of his power to meet the lady again. If I understand it, the doctor avenged the insult in a summary manner."

"I knocked the rascal down, if that is all," explained Campbell. "I could do no less than that, under the circumstances."

"Thank you, doctor, thank you. Oh, why was I not there to do it myself!" cried Verney.

"You seem to be taken with the lady," said Rawdon with a smile. "I suppose you will not feel well enough to rejoin your troop for some days?"

"I am afraid not, my lord," responded Verney with a dolorous look. "I am very weak, and fear I could not take the saddle yet."

"No doubt, no doubt," ejaculated Rawdon. "But if I detailed your troop for special service in this vicinity, making your headquarters on this plantation—"

"I could attend to *that*, my lord," confessed Verney, eagerly. "Doubtless the service would not be heavy."

"Only to hunt down this Captain Forrest who treated you so rudely to-day."

"I am the man for *that* service, my lord," admitted Verney. "Indeed, I could claim it as a right almost, after what has happened."

"Do you feel well enough to come downstairs?" asked Rawdon. "I enjoy the society of this female rebel immensely, although she has a bitter tongue."

"She is a smart lassie; a bonny chiel," put in Campbell. "Look til yerself, Verney!"

The young man blushed vividly, but said nothing, and the two left him to finish dressing, and went down to the parlours, where they found Margaret engaged in a discussion with the officers of the staff, and holding her own against all who chose to break a lance with her. Lord Rawdon fixed himself upon a sofa near her, and joined in the conversation.

"Lieutenant Verney speaks highly of the prowess of this young rebel Forrest," he said, "and I must believe that he is the beau ideal of chivalry. However, Verney is anxious to meet him again."

"My lord, Edwin Forrest is a soldier and a gentle-

man, and would doubtless greet Lieutenant Verney as warmly as he could desire."

"No doubt he would. Ha—what is that, orderly?"

"A prisoner, my lord, brought in by our loyalist riders. Major Cunningham wishes to know if you desire to question him."

"Bring him in at once; I wish to see him, and perhaps I can get some information from him."

The man retired, and directly after a guard appeared, leading in the prisoner. He was a long, lank, light-haired young man, with an innocent face and mild blue eyes. It was plainly to be seen that he was a Whig, for he wore a nondescript uniform, patched and faded, and his boots were ornamented by huge brass spurs.

"Ha, my man, what is your name?" asked Rawdon.

"Be quick with your answer," snapped the officer in charge. "That is Lord Rawdon."

"Is it!" exclaimed the prisoner. "Goodness gracious! I never seed a live lord before, stranger. Sort o' pooty, ain't he? Looks a good deal like a man, too, don't he, stranger?"

"Be careful of your answers, my man," said Rawdon. "What brought you here?"

"Them rotted scouts of Cunningham. I was kinder lookin' round to see what I could see, 'cause thar was a nation lot of red-coats round, and three of 'em hopped on my back and took me."

"Then you are a spy."

"Spy? What's that?"

"You may find out, my man," answered Rawdon. "Miss Fletcher, may I ask you to retire?"

A meaning look had passed between the captive and Margaret, unseen by anyone except Doctor Campbell, who compressed his lips and said nothing.

"My lord," suggested Margaret, "I know this man, and he is an innocent, harmless creature, meaning no wrong to anyone."

"That's me," said the prisoner. "Oh, Lordy, yes; *I'm* innocent!"

"You must retire, Miss Fletcher," persisted Rawdon. This interview is not fitted for you to listen to."

"But promise that you will not be hard upon the poor man."

"He won't do nothing to me, Miss Maggie," said the man. "Lord bless you, I know something *he* don't."

Margaret knew the man too well not to be certain that he would not make this statement unless he meant what he said, and she retired.

"Now, sir!" commanded Rawdon.

"Now, sir!" replied the prisoner, coolly.

"What is your name?"

"Name? I dunno as *my* name would be of any use to you. I'm a plain man, known pooty well about Ninety-six; but I don't associate with these *ords*, you know."

"Ah; you think them bad company, perhaps, my good man?"

"Nation bad cump'ny. Infernal bad—if I mout say it."

"No more trifling, sir. What is your name?"

"Bill," replied the Whig.

"Bill? What else?"

"Bill is good enuff for you. Same as Bill Cunningham's, though we don't hang together, I reckon."

"Will you give me your name or not?"

"If it's all the same to *you*, I'd rather not."

One of his guards said something to the officer in a low tone, and the officer turned to his commander—

"If you please, my lord, Major Cunningham is without, and he knows this man well."

"Ask him to step in, Captain Stewart. It will go hard with you, my man, for this obstinacy."

"That mout be, my lord. I dunno what to say myself, 'cause I ain't a responsible party, so to speak."

Cunningham came in, and was greeted by the prisoner with a noisy laugh.

"Hullo, Bill! how is it? They ain't sure who I be, and they sent for you to identify me. You know'd me afore."

"What does the scoundrel mean by speaking to me in that familiar manner?" demanded Cunningham.

"Pshaw, now Bill! don't talk *that* way. It hurts my feelin's. A man that I've whipped so many times sence we was knee-high to a tree-toad orter know me well enough."

"I do know you, my man, as you will find to your cost. My lord, this audacious fellow, innocent as he appears, is that notorious scout and spy, William Beales, and the most dangerous man in this district. He deserves hanging, if a man ever did."

"I think you are right, major. From your knowledge of the man, should you say that we could get any trustworthy information from him?"

"No, my lord. You might tear him to pieces with wild horses, and not wring a confession from him. He would lie enough to sink a church, but would tell nothing to hurt the Whigs."

"I told ye he know'd me afore," said Beales. "Say, Bill, do you remember the time I pulled your nose at Spartanburg Court House? That was a high old day, wasn't it?"

Cunningham uttered an oath, and laid his hand upon his sword.

"This insolence shall not go unpunished," said Rawdon, "You took him within the lines, major?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Then why bring him here? Take him away and hang him, for an example for all spies in the future."

"I wouldn't give that order, if I was you, my Lord Loftus," suggested Beales.

"Give me a reason."

"Reason enuff," retorted Beales. "Some of the boys like me, you know. Please to look at this paper?"

He took something from his bosom and gave it to the commandant, who unfolded it and read—

"For the safety of my confidential scout, William Beales, now detached upon private service, I promise to any British commander that if he is injured, I will execute in the same manner a British captain, McLeod, captured to-day at Tounly's plantation.

"EDWIN FORREST, Capt."

CHAPER VI.

THE SPY'S LITTLE GAME.

To say that Rawdon was angry would be using mild terms. He was in a terrible rage, and showed it by a quiet, fixed glance, before which anyone except the stout-hearted scout would have quailed, but he only smiled.

"And this young rebel, this candidate for the gallows, dares to send a message of this kind to *me*?" he cried.

"Not to you in particular," replied Beales. "He thought I might get caught, and so he took keer that someone should answer for it if I got my neck stretched. To tell the truth, the hull truth, and nothing but the truth, I wasn't on a scout when they took me, but was kerrying a letter from a gentleman to a young lady. If I'm took inside a camp, I'm willin' to take my chance of the rope, but I ain't done nothin' this time."

"Hang him!" ordered Rawdon. "He deserves it, if any man ever did."

"Take your own way, my lord; but, as sure as you live, he will hang the Scotch captain."

"He is a fool, and has got himself into trouble," said Rawdon. "Let them do as they like with him!"

A murmur of disapproval was heard among the officers, and the general turned to them.

"You think I am wrong, gentlemen?" he said, enquiringly.

"Decidedly, my lord," responded Colonel Stewart. "Captain McLeod is a good officer, and was taken while bravely defending his waggon-train. This rebel will surely hang him, and we can afford to wait until he is at liberty before we proceed to extremities with this man."

"Very true, colonel; there is no hurry about the matter, and of course he ought to have a fair trial. Ask Miss Fletcher if there is any part of the house in which a prisoner can be safely confined."

The countenance of the scout brightened, for he knew that he was reprieved. Margaret showed the way to a strong room in the eastern angle of the building, a sort of wine-closet, having only one small window, and that not large enough to admit the passage of a man's body. The prisoner was securely bound and thrust into this, and a guard placed outside the door, with orders to shoot him if he attempted to escape.

"It's all right, gentlemen," said Beales. "You've got me; but if I ever get cl'ar, mout be I should remember what Bill Cunningham has don'. Good-night, and if you'll be so good, I'd like suth a' to eat and drink."

"I will send you something," said Margaret, as

the door was closed. "That is, if you will give me permission, my lord. I would not have anyone starve under my roof."

"You may send him anything you like after it has been examined by the officer in charge, Lieutenant Bailey. See to it, lieutenant."

The officer bowed, and they returned to the parlour. Shortly after, supper was served, and the officers sat long over their wine, boasting of the great things they would do with the rebels when they met again. Rawdon had felt severely the taunt of Margaret in regard to the battle at Hobkirk's, for, although he had not retreated there, he felt that the stubborn fight had been really in favour of the Americans. Though the British had remained masters of the field, Greene, leaving Rawdon to pursue his way, had moved down the country, and was ready to fight or fly, as seemed most politic. The British general felt, as many of their leaders did, that British power was on the wane in the colonies, and that only the most superhuman efforts on their part could enable the English to hold even the fortified posts another year.

The Fabian policy of Greene had proved very successful, wearying out the British by a series of forced marches through a strange country, and decimated them by disease, while the Americans, used to the climate, and inured to all sorts of exposure, had few losses except in battle. The English were even now waiting for information of the plans of Greene, ~~do-~~ signing to assail him upon the first opportunity.

The night came, dark and gloomy. The British officers had retired to rest, and guards were posted to give notice of the approach of the enemy, for they were used to having their quarters beaten up by the indefatigable troops of the patriots. Margaret had retired, but not to rest, as we shall see.

Beales had fared sumptuously, for Margaret had sent him a portion of their supper and some wine. When he had finished, the guard, who had stood over him with a loaded musket during the meal, bound him again and departed, locking the door after him.

"Ah!" muttered Beales, now I *am* in a trap. If they hadn't put me in such a hitch I might git cl'ar, I reckon. This comes of kerrying letters when I ought to 'a' been on a scout."

He rolled over on his side and looked at the window.

"Too narrer," he muttered. "I mout as well try to go through the eye of a needle, that I mout. What did the gal mean by showing them such a hive as this? She couldn't 'a' done wuss by me ef she wanted 'em to ketch me and keep me, cuss it. Oh, Bill Cunningham, *won't* I give it to you hot if I ever git cl'ar! I wonder whar that guard is now?"

He rolled over and over until he gained the door, and laid his ear at the bottom, listening carefully. A steady breathing announced that the guard was lying near the door, and if not asleep, very near it.

"What put him asleep?" muttered Beales, as he rolled back to the centre of the room. "It's death fur a Britisher to go to sleep on guard, and they don't often do it. This gits me, this does."

At this moment he heard a low rap upon the floor under him, and sat up in some surprise. A moment after, a portion of the floor was cautiously raised, and a sable face appeared. The owner of this face carried a lantern, which he partly shaded with his coat. He hung it upon a nail in one of the beams and drew himself slowly out of the darkness, and Beales saw that he held a knife in his hand; but the face was too broad and good-natured to be evil.

Putting his finger on his lips as a sign of caution, he crept noiselessly across the floor and cut the cords which bound the hands and feet of the prisoner, who sat up and began to rub his limbs vigorously, to restore the circulation.

When this was done, he rose and followed his conductor, whom he now recognised as one of the slaves of the Fletchers, called Cato. The negro grasped the edge of the opening and let himself down, signing to Beales to follow—which he did, and found himself in the cellar of the house, among wine-casks, bins of fruit and vegetables, and the like.

The scout kept quiet, casting looks of surprise upon his guide, who proceeded to close the trap-door, fitting it in its place with such nicety that only the most careful scrutiny could detect it.

“Yah, yah!” said Cato, in a low, delighted chuckle, when this was done. “Enty we fool ‘em, Mass’ Beales? You keep ‘til; leave all to Cato, for ne sabe you, suah.”

“Who sent you?”

“Who you s’pose? Missee Margit, course! Don’t tink dat Cato Fletcher gwine to mind anyone ‘cept Missee Margit or de cunnel, does yer? If yer does, you berry much ‘ceibed, dat’s all. Don’t car’ nuffin foh dese *laws*; I don’t. Dey ain’t no great shakes. Now you come ‘long.”

“All right, old boy. Lead the way and at once.”

The negro made his way among the boxes and casks with great caution, and stopped in a corner under the stairway which led into the upper part of the house.

“You look at dat wall, Mass’ Beales,” he said, “and you tell me if you see anyt’ing wrong dar.”

The scout examined it carefully and could see nothing. Chuckling again, Cato fumbled about until

he touched a spring, and a narrow door apparently a part of the wall itself, swung outward, revealing a long dark passage. The two went in, and the door closed of its own weight and the darkness swallowed them up.

Lord Rawdon, upon leaving the supper-table, had been shown to a room on the first floor. When there he sent for Lieutenant Verney and a young ensign, both rising young officers, and they were brought to his room by a servant. Verney, upon entering, was surprised at the fierce expression upon the face of Rawdon.

"What has happened, my lord? Surely something has happened to vex you."

"Something has indeed happened, Verney. You know this audacious rebel, Captain Forrest. Well, Major Cunningham has captured one of his scouts and this was taken from him."

He produced the note threatening the execution of McLeod, which he placed in the young man's hand, and he read it with many exclamations of surprise.

"It is surpassingly impudent, my lord, but he is a very impudent fellow. What can we do about it?"

"The man must be hunted down and his party dispersed. I have a captain's commission at my disposal, and if you are lucky enough to capture this fellow it is yours."

"My lord, I should be glad enough to attempt it, without the incentive of a rise in rank, and willingly undertake the commission. When am I to start?"

"To-morrow, at two o'clock in the morning. You will take with you your own troop as well as that of Major Cunningham and track this man down. Cunningham has information which will aid you much in the undertaking. Ha! I thought I heard a sound."

"It was the wind, my lord. It is rising rapidly."

"Some one may be in the next room. Look out and see if you can find a servant."

Luckily enough a girl was passing through the hall on her way to the garret where she slept, and Arthur called to her.

"Whose room is this?" he said, laying his hand upon the door of the suspected room.

"Lord bless you, marse sojer, dat's massa's room."

"Colonel Fletcher's?"

"Iss, massa."

"Who is sleeping there to-night?"

"Nobody, massa. Missee Margit won't put nobody in her fader's room, for suah."

"Is it locked now?"

"I reckon not, massa. You can try do doah, but I don't tink missee like it if you go in dar."

He tried the door and found that it opened easily, and looked in. The room was a large one and he could not see objects distinctly, but made out that another door opened from this room into the next one south.

"Whose is the room beyond, my girl?" said Verney. "Hold up the light so that I can see. Ah! that will do; the room is empty."

That next room belong to missee, but she no sleep dar to-night, but she stay wid ole Missee Fletcher, upstairs."

"You may go," said Verney, as he turned back into Lord Rawdon's room. "My lord," he said, "I have looked into the room, and it is quite empty."

"It must have been the wind, but I have been so troubled by spies that I start at every shadow. I will make an example of this fellow we have taken when McLeod is exchanged. I will teach the

scoundrel that I am not to be insulted with impunity. And now for this skulker, Forrest. Cunningham informs me that one of his men who was punished for some breach of discipline and joined the Loyal Scouts, can guide you to their favourite haunt in the swamp beyond the river, where they are no doubt spending the night. You will have fifty men of your own and nearly twice the same number of the light troop of Cunningham. No doubt the force of Forrest is not more than eighty. You must, however, aim to surprise them, and remember that we do not care to be hampered by prisoners. You will, however, be sure to bring this Captain Forrest to me. Do this, and a captain's commission in Tarleton's legion awaits you."

"You may depend upon me, my lord," said the lieutenant. "But have you sent orders for the troops to be prepared to march?"

"That has been attended to. Ensign Bailey will accompany you in your march and aid you in the attack. Do you feel well enough for the work?"

"I have never felt better in my life, your lordship," replied the young soldier, eagerly.

"You may then retire, and try and get a little sleep before you set out."

The young officers left the room and retired. Hardly had they left the hall when a man crept stealthily out of the colonel's room, and, shaking his hand at the door of his lordship, crept away in the darkness of the house.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MARCH THROUGH THE SWAMP.

THE night was intensely dark when the troop of Verney, accompanied by the Loyal Scouts, rode out of the Fletcher plantation and headed toward the

river. The deserter, who was to guide them to the slaughter of his countrymen, was, for the present riding between Cunningham and Verney, for he could be of no use to them until they crossed the stream, as the companions of the Tory major knew the country as well as he.

"What induces you to give up your countrymen to us?" asked Verney, turning to the traitor with ill-concealed dislike.

He was a slight but muscular young man, who had not a bad face by any means, but, on the contrary, when in repose, had a good-humoured though rather cunning expression.

"I'll tell you, lieutenant, seeing it's you. Captain Forrest hasn't used me fairly. You see, I was with him from the first, and have been in many a scrimmage, and he promised me a sergeantcy, and I ought to have had it. But the other day I took it into my head to go and see my young woman, who lives up the river a piece. I was gone three days—longer than I had any right, perhaps—but he took my corporal's rank from me, and gave the sergeant's stripes to another man. I got mad, and said something back, and he put me under guard, and swore he'd have me up to the halberds for deserting. It takes a strong cage to keep one of our sand-lappers in, and I broke out and got away, and now I'll have revenge on him somehow. You don't seem to like the idea of my turning traitor, lieutenant."

"That is your own look-out, and I ought to be satisfied since we profit by it. Where is it that Forrest makes his camp?"

"You know where it is, major. Bear's Island is the place, and you've hunted over it many a time."

"Ay, man, I know the spot, and a good camp it is. How many has Forrest with him now, do you know?"

"Well, he had nigh onto seventy when I came away, but he was just going to send a party to take up the boats along the river and carry them to the other side for Sumter to use. You see that the Game Cock has been picking up considerable ammunition and arms this month, and he wants to send them to Greene."

"Is Sumter out, then?"

"Yes, he's got over that cut he took at Hanging Rock, and now he rides the road again with three hundred good men behind him. They'll make you trouble, sure, major."

"You speak as if you liked it, my man."

"Well, you see, I can't help having a sort of pride in the boys, though I've left them. You can't deny that they've fought, and fought well, this long time. I'd never have left them, that I tell you, if they hadn't treated me so."

"A good soldier never deserts his colours, though the flag of rebellion," said Verney. "Here, Cunningham, take your precious traitor, and if he tries to get away, put a ball through him."

"Go away? By Jinks I don't want to have Ed Forrest's men pick me up, for they'd shoot me like a dog, and they'd catch me sure. They know me, you see, and they'd have my blood, no matter what came of it."

Verney said no more, but reined in his horse and fell back to the head of his own troop, while the spy and Cunningham rode through the ranks of the scouts to lead them, for they had now reached the river, which rolled black and dark before them.

"Steady!" was the word. "Where is that rope, Frazee? We are sure to lose some men if we don't use it."

The man produced a long, light rope, perhaps a

hundred feet long, which hung at the saddle-bow of one of the scouts, and the end was passed from man to man, until fifty men in double file were able to hold it in their hands. The spy was in front, holding the end, as he knew the ford best. They plunged into the dark water and struggled through to the other bank, safely guided by the traitor. Four times he went back, carrying his rope, until the whole force was safe upon the northern bank.

"And here we are," he said, as the last man came out of the water. "Now tell me I don't know the river. Now tell me I can't guide you well!"

"You have done well so far, my man," said Verney, "and I am disposed to trust you. But beware; for the first sign of treachery on your part will be the signal for your death."

"Now see here," protested the deserter, boldly. "I don't care about going any further with you if so be you don't trust me. I'm willing to go back any time you say so, for it's a nasty job I've taken in hand, and Forrest's men won't let me off easy if they grab me. If you think you can get along without me, you've only got to say the word, that's all."

"Silence, sir!" cried Verney. "No insolence on your part. You are expected to guide us to this swamp island."

"The major knows where it is," grumbled the man. "I ain't no call to go unless you want me, that's sure."

"Take your place without another word and lead on," ordered Verney. "I dislike a traitor above all things, even when his treason is for the good of the cause. Keep an eye on him, major."

The Tory nodded, and the troop began to move again, but slowly, for they were upon the verge of one of those interminable swamps so common along the low rivers of the Carolinas.

A wonderful stillness reigned about them, and every noise they made was heard with remarkable distinctness. They passed on under the shadow of patriarchal trees, from which the moss hung in trailing masses, brushing against their faces as they passed. The giants of the forest took surprising shapes in the gloom.

Now and then a sullen splash was heard, as some huge terrapin tumbled from a log into the slimy pools scared by the tread of the horsemen. The night-owl fitted away at their approach with his loud, hoo hoo, hoo, making the horses prance and tremble.

The most stout-hearted among the British dragoons was awed by the strange situation in which they found themselves, while the Tories delighted in it. Most of them were born "swamp-suckers"—men who had passed half their lives in these dismal shades, and had hunted or fished in them for subsistence. They felt, too, how inferior the dragoon were to them in their knowledge of this kind of fighting, and the regulars knew it.

The men had fallen naturally enough into India file, the better to follow their guide and to get through the difficult path through which he guided them which would hardly have admitted the passage of more than one person at a time. The path was like wise covered with fallen logs and branches of trees and there were spots where the water rose nearly to the horses' girths. They floundered through with much cursing on the part of the dragoons, who did not like to soil their fine uniforms, and amid the half smothered laughter of the Tories, to whom such work was pastime. The guide whispered to the major—

"Ain't it a pity now, meejer, that such a man as you should be commanded by a little whipper-snapper of a fellow like that lieutenant? And why

THE RIVAL DRAGOONS.

Because he commands rig'lars. To the devil with rig'lars, I say."

"You are right, my man," answered the major, much gratified. "Don't be afraid to talk, for these men behind are my fellows, and won't repeat a word we say. Do you happen to know Miss Margaret Fletcher?"

"Know her? Of course I do! Lord love you, she's the handsomest little rebel in Carolina, that I'll say for her."

"Rebel enough, no doubt, and proud as Lucifer, like all her accursed race. I want revenge upon the Fletchers, father and son, and I'll have it, or die trying for it, you may be sure."

"That's right, meejor; don't let no one tread on you, that's what I say."

"The girl is beautiful, and would make a man a good wife, I think."

"You're mighty right."

"I'll tell you something, my man. I intend to marry that girl."

"You do; ha! ha! ha!"

"What are you laughing at, you scoundrel?" roared the major, in a passion.

"Why, meejor, it made me laugh to think what Forrest would say if he heard you say that. You know that he has a p'ixen notion after the girl himself, and I understood it was a settled thing as soon as the country was quiet."

"Was that what you laughed at?"

"Of course; you don't think I'd laugh at you, do you, meejor? I ain't quite a born fool as yit. But the girl is awful set in her way, and like as not she'd refuse you."

"Refuse me? She hates me like death."

"Seems to me your chances are rather thin, meejor if that is the case."

"What do I care for her love or hate? Marry me she must, if my plans do not fail me. Are you ready to earn a hundred guineas?"

"Me? You bet I am! How is it to be done, meejor?"

"The day that Captain Forrest or Colonel Fletcher are prisoners in my hands, by your means, I will pay you that amount in golden guineas."

"You want 'em alive?"

"I would prefer that—the colonel especially. As for this Forrest, the sooner he dies the better."

"Yes; and that would be no rivalry between you uns after that, nor any layin' claim to the same property. I see your point, meejor; but I can't see what you want with the cunnel."

"To work upon her love of him. To threaten him with a disgraceful death if she does not become my wife. I know the species of insane idolatry with which the girl regards that white-haired old villain——"

"Stiddy, meejor; the cunnel is an old man, and though I'm ag'in him now, he's done me many a good turn, and by my soul I won't hear him miscalled by anybody."

"You forget who I am, fellow," threatened the major.

"No I don't meejor—no I don't; I mean it in all respect, and I hope you'll bear it in mind. At the same time, I'll help you in any lawful way to take them prisoners. Of course you don't mean to do the old man any harm, though you threaten him?"

"Certainly not," averred Cunningham, with a malicious gleam in his eyes.

"Then I'm the man you want, meejor," said the traitor. "A leetle trifle in hand to bind the barg~~in~~ would just suit me."

The Tory thrust his hand into his waistcoat pocket, and drew out something, which chinked as it was deposited in the hand of the traitor.

"Keerful of that log, major. Oh, Lord, what a terrapin that was! Did you hear him plump in, that time? By mighty, it sounded like an earthquake. Never you mind about the colonel, for you shall see him this night."

"What! Is he at Forrest's camp?"

The traitor nodded, and signified to the Tory that he must be careful, for they were now in a dangerous vicinity. The word was passed for silence, and every voice ceased at once. All at once they reached the bank of a deep and turbid stream, such as is seen only in the impenetrable bayous of the South and this stream must be crossed. They pulled up with many curses, for the dragoons were already sick of the job they had undertaken, and only Verney was willing to advance.

"Send that deserter here," he commanded, and the man was at once thrust forward by the Tories.

"Are we to cross this stream?" he demanded.

"Yes, if you mean to git at the island whar Forrest is camped."

"How do they cross it?"

"They've got a flat," replied the man. "But I don't know whar it is."

"Don't they leave it in the same place every night?"

"No, they don't. They move it about, sometimes to one place and sometimes to another. It would be mighty hard work to find it, but I reckon I could do it if you would trust me."

"Do you mean to go away?"

"Not very fur. I mean to go down a little piece and hail the other shore, whar I know they always post a sentry. He'll know whar it is."

" You scoundrel; would you betray us ? "

" Not a bit of it. I see you don't understand, and you won't trust me. Well, you come along with me and see how I work it. If you do find anything wrong, down me at once."

" I will do it," hissed Vorney. " Sergeant, come with me. Major Cunningham, keep the men quiet until we return."

" Dismount the men, lieutenant. They might see 'em if they keep on hossback," said the man, quickly. " I don't blame you for not trusting me ; I wouldn't if I was in your place."

" Lead the way and be silent, for your life, for I will bury my sword in your body at the first sign of treachery.

The man said no more, but led the way down the bank of the river, stumbling over fallen logs and splashing through stagnant pools until he paused at a point where a great tree had fallen into the water and stretched nearly to the other shore.

" Now then," said he, " I'll give the signal, and you shall see how nicely I will fool him. I am going to whistle, so don't take that as a sign of treachery."

The gripe of the sergeant was on his shoulder and the point of a bayonet pressed against his breast. The night was now so intensely dark that no object could be seen across the river. The traitor raised his fingers to his mouth and emitted a low, cautious whistle, which, nevertheless, sounded strangely distinct in the stillness of the swamp.

" Now wait," said the traitor, " and keep quiet, you two."

The whistle was replied to instantly, and soon after they could hear some person moving along the opposite bank, and a voice cried :

" Who goes there ? "

“ Friends of liberty ; for God and country.”

“ What name ?”

“ Washington. And the Continental Congress.”

“ All right, my lad ; who is it ?”

“ Goodwin.”

“ Oh, Charley, is that you ? Where have you been these two days ? The captain is boiling mad about you, I can tell you.”

“ He won’t be so mad when he knows what I’ve got with me. There’s a British lieutenant and a sergeant not far off that me and some of the boys have picked up. Where’s the flat ?”

“ It’s up above at the big cypress. Are you afraid of wet feet ?”

“ Not so afraid as you think, Long Jack,” replied the man, “ but we’ve got something with us we don’t want to wet. Arms, ammunition and horses. What do you think of that, my boy ?”

“ Good for you, Charley ! You are the boy can do it. Have you seen Bill ?”

“ No ; ain’t seen him for over two days. Where did he go ?”

“ Why, the captain sent him up to Fletcher’s on a arrant and we ain’t seen him since. Have you got any Jamaica with you ?”

“ Just a drop or two.”

“ Then keep some for me when I am relieved,” said the sentry, “ that’s a good fellow.”

“ That’s all right ; you shall have it, warm and comfortable. Is anyone watching the flat ?”

“ No ; the Tories dare not follow us into the swamp. Good-night, and don’t forget the Jamaica, for I’m awful dry.”

They heard the steps of the man receding in the distance, and Verney tapped the traitor upon the shoulder.

"Well done, sir; but is your name Goodwin?"

"Not a bit of it. Lieutenant Goodwin is a scout of Forrest's, and they do call him a poaty good 'un. You know the chap that the maejor took up by Fletcher's? That's the Bill Beales he talked about, and this Goodwin and him are always in some devilry together. Bill won't be likely to go on a scout ag'in in a hurry."

"I am afraid if we capture your captain and release the prisoner he has, that Bill Beales will never scout again, for Rawdon will hang him, sure. Where is this big cypress?"

"About two hundred rods above whar the troop is waiting. Back with you, for we ain't got much time to lose if you mean to make the attack to-night."

They reached the troop without any trouble, and found them standing beside their horses, waiting impatiently for the coming of the officers. At a whispered word of command they mounted and moved up the river until they reached a gigantic cypress, which jutted out over the water.

"Here's the cypress, lieutenant," said the guide. "It ain't run away, you see. Now the first thing to do is to get the horses over, I s'pose. Tie them together in sections of ten and send them across in the flat. Who shall bring it over? Give me four men and I'll have it here in half-a-minnit."

The sergeant told off four men and instructed them to keep an eye on the actions of the guide. The five plunged into the water and crossed to the outer bank, where they found the flat tied to a tree.

"Good enough," whispered the guide, who personated Goodwin. "Here is the rope on the tree, and I'll show you how to take the horses over without a soul moving from the other bank."

There was a long rope fastened to the stern of the flat—which was large enough to hold fifty horses—and another at the bow. The one at the bow was passed once around the tree to which the flat had been tied. The guide kept the loose end in his hand and let it slip through his fingers as the men pushed the heavy boat across the stream.

“Ketch hold of the rope, some of you,” said the guide, as they touched the bank. “Have you got lariats enough to fasten the horses?”

That had been done already by passing a lariat through the bit-rings of each horse and fastening it on each side. The horses, to the number of fifty, were crowded on board, and the guide and his four men stepped on board. Fifty strong men seized the rope, and as it was passed about the tree on the other side, of course they soon pulled the prow against the opposite bank. The horses were led off, and the flat pulled back by means of the rope at the stern, and another load sent across. This was kept up until every horse had crossed, the four men who had crossed with the guide standing guard over them. The dragoons now crowded into the boat, which would carry a hundred, and waited on the bank while the flat was pulled back for the remainder. When they were on board the men who had already crossed seized the rope and pulled them over and they turned to look for their horses. What was their horror when they found those they had left in charge lying stunned or dead upon the earth and every horse gone!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BITER BITTEN.

WHEN Edwin Forrest rode back from the pursuit of the scattered band of the Loyal Scouts, he made at

once for the fastness in the swamp, the citadel of the hunted men of the South in the days of "Tory ascendancy." Here in those almost impenetrable wilds, they could find a refuge, whence only men of their own class could hope to dislodge them, and then it was only to fly to an equally secure retreat in some other part of the swamp. Knowing as they did every nook and cranny, every intricate path and short route through the swamp, it was always easy for them to double upon their pursuers and leave them far behind. Before proceeding to the swamp the captain had detached Beales, his most redoubtable scout, to carry a letter to the trysting-place where he had so often met Margaret, informing her of the impossibility of their meeting at present, until Rawdon had moved out of the vicinity. The best of scouts are often caught napping, and Beales fell into an ambush as we have recorded, and was taken prisoner. This was the same cool personago who had been confined in the Fletcher mansion, and who had escaped through the agency of the negro.

The swamp camp was a strange one, an island of green timber rising out of the swamp, with an open glade in the centre, large enough to make a camp for two thousand men. Here they lived in plenty. The rivers teemed with fish and terrapin, and deer were quite abundant in the season, and the commissariat was easily and bountifully supplied. The horses were picketed in the edge of a little thicket, under guard. Near the centre of the island was a group of small huts, showing that the place had been used as a camp for a long time, for our partisans did not build cabins for a temporary camp. Fires were lighted all about the glade, and men were scattered here and there smoking, drinking, and playing cards for fabulous amounts in Continental currency, then

hardly worth the paper on which it was printed, and which the lucky (?) winners took up with a gesture of ill-concealed disgust.

"How much have you got there, Tom?" said a rough-looking rifleman, as a companion gathered up a large pile of bills of various denominations.

"Three or four thousand dollars," answered the man carelessly. "I'll give it for that saddle you took from the Englishman to-day."

"Thankee," replied the rifleman. "I reckon I won't trade just now. This yer Continental money ain't worth shucks just now, and I ain't got no cart to lug it around in."

"You ain't in fur a trade, I see," said the other. "Now I'll give you a chance; put this up ag'in your saddle, best two games in three, at high-low-jack."

"I'm agreeable to that," responded the rifleman. "Projuce yer papers, Tom."

Forrest was moving to and fro in the camp, looking after the comfort of his men, and seeing that the guards were properly posted and performing their duty. He had paused a moment over a game which was being played, looking on with a slight smile, when a man, splashed with the mud of the swamp, and breathless with fatigue, burst suddenly into their midst, and hurried up to the captain.

"Hah! Goodwin!" cried the captain; "you here! What news? quick!"

"Kain't you come somewheres out of hearin' of the rest?" said the man, hurriedly. "I've got somethin' particular to tell you."

They went apart from the rest, under the shadow of a giant sycamore.

"Bill's took, captain—took by that black Tory, Cunningham, and they say it will go hard with him. They passed me as I was layin' in the bush, and I

judged they was takin' him to Rawdon to see what he could git out of Bill."

"I don't think they will make much out of that. Bill Beales is not the man to tell anything."

"But it's death for him!" protested Goodwin, "He was inside their lines, that's no denying that; and Rawdon is mighty hard on spies."

"Let him hurt Beales, if he dare! I will hang this Captain McLeod if he does."

"That wouldn't help Bill any, if they was to stretch him," said Goodwin. "Kain't we do something for him?"

"You say they took him to Fletcher's?"

"Yes; for I follered 'em there."

"Then if anything is to be done for him, there is one at Fletcher's who will not fail to take any opportunity. I should like to be there when Rawdon questions him, and hear Beales answer in that innocent way he has. Did you notice that Scotch surgeon to-day, Goodwin?"

"Notice him? Yes. He's a brick, the doctor is, and the boys all like him right well. They say he knocked Cunningham head over heels for putting his hands on Miss Maggie. Served him right too."

"There is something about him which reminds me of my old home in bonny Scotland," said Forrest, musingly. "His hard old face is strangely familiar to me somehow, and why I cannot tell."

"He asked a good many questions about you, capt'in, and seemed mighty pleased when you cleared out the Tories. He hain't very hot to see us licked, that's sartin."

"Do you think Rawdon will make a drive at us here, Goodwin?"

"It looks mighty like it. I see Verney's troop fixing up for a ride, and the scouts are together ag'in and mean mischief."

"I only wish they would try it," averred Forrest with sparkling eyes. "We'd make the swamp so hot for them that they'd be glad to ride back as they came, with many a saddle empty. Verney is a brave man and an honourable foe, and it is a pleasure to measure swords with him."

"They do say that he is mightily taken with Miss Maggie," suggested Goodwin, with a sly look.

"And much good may it do him if he is. Margaret Fletcher is not the girl to be taken by a red coat and flattering tongue. Cunningham is the man I fear. He would stop at nothing, and since what has happened at the Fletcher plantation, he is more to be feared than ever. No one will be safe until the villain is under the sed."

"I've been doing a little something since I went away, capt'in; let me whisper in your ear, for it isn't anything I'd like to have the boys know, just now."

He whispered a brief sentence in the ear of his commander, who started back with a look of surprise.

"Is it possible? Do you know that your fate is fixed if they catch you, my brave fellow?"

"Oh, Bill and me are always ready to take the chances," replied the man, quietly. "I don't think they suspect me in the least, and I ought to be able to fool Cunningham. If not, I can pull a rope as well as a better man. Shall I go back and carry it through?"

"If you dare risk it, for I will not advise you or order you to take any such risk."

"Then you needn't, Cap. See here: Corporal Charles Goodwin, absent without leave; supposed to have deserted. That's the report to make, you know."

"Go then, and God be with you. Oh, that I had a few more men like you, Charles Goodwin! When shall we expect you?"

"Early to-morrow morning, I think. It's a good three hours' ride to the river, and I left my horse on the other side of the creek. Good-night, Cap, and if I go under, tell the boys how it was done, and see a little after my family at Ninety-six, if you ever get down that way."

"You may be certain of that, my brave fellow. Good-by, and be careful what you do."

The captain pressed the hand of the swamp-scout warmly and gave him the word for the night, with other information to aid him in his future course. The two then parted, and the captain called his officers together and had a consultation, which resulted in the guards being doubled and the partisans warned to be ready to move out at a moment's warning. The fires were put out early that night, and silence reigned in the camp, after the pickets had been sent to various points.

About one o'clock in the morning, it might have been, they were startled by the distant hoot of an owl. The guards were instantly upon the alert, and the word was passed to the captain's quarters. Half-an-hour after, a long line of dusky figures stole out of the island camp, heading toward the river. The thick underbrush quickly hid them from view.

Forrest was standing under a large sycamore, waiting anxiously, when a man hurried up to him and saluted.

"What is it, Rains?" demanded the captain. "Any news?"

"Yes; Goodwin is back, and he says he has some prisoners and horses. They have gone to find the flat."

"Ensign Throop, take twenty men and go up the river. When the horses are sent across—they will cross first—take charge of them. If there is a guard, see that they do not make any alarm. You know how to do it," were Forrest's instant orders.

The ensign called to his men and hurried away. When the horses had all been landed, several men crept up in the darkness and knocked down the guard, and hurried the horses into the woods. This was the position of affairs when we left the force of Cunningham and Verney, after they had discovered the loss of the horses.

"What is this?" hissed Verney, seizing the guide by the throat. "Where are the horses, you scoundrel?"

"Now see here," said the man, shaking himself free, "you take your hands off me, lieutenant. "It ain't my fault if the horses are gone; I wasn't with them."

"Who has taken them?"

"That I can't tell, if you was to kill me. Do you want to rouse the rebel camp, yelling out that way?"

"You are too fast, lieutenant," said Cunningham. "I don't believe the man is to blame. How far is it to the rebel camp?"

"Not above a quarter of a mile. We could hear 'em if they were stirring, major."

"Let us decide what to do, lieutenant. In my opinion, the horses have been run off by some sneaking rebels, hidden in the swamp. That they haven't seen us, is plain from the fact that they have made no attack, as they might have done successfully while we were crossing. Now, shall we go on and assault the camp, or go back like cowards?"

"You shall not need to ask the question twice, sir. Forward we go, as a matter of course."

The men will fight all the better because there is no retreat," said Cunningham. "At least, mine will, for they know their fate if taken by the Whigs. Forrest takes no prisoners from the Loyal Scouts."

"Pass the word to form in line," ordered Verney. "You, Sir Traitor, come with me, and look well to yourself, for I will not let you get out of my sight."

"That's fair, lieutenant," replied the man, humbly. "I'll do my best to serve you—as you deserve."

Verney looked hard at the speaker, but said nothing, and took the head of the line. In front marched the Loyal Scouts, with their rifles ready, headed by Cunningham, while in the interval between them and the regulars marched Verney, with the guide beside him. A dead silence had fallen upon the scene, but as they advanced they saw a distant gleam of light and heard the voice of a sentry cry, "Half-past one, and all's well!" The cry was taken up and repeated, and at a muttered command from the leaders, the column halted.

"Now say I hain't led you to the camp, if you can," whispered the guide. "Thar they are, and you kin see their fires."

"You have done well, my man," confessed Verney, "and I begin to think that we have accused you unjustly. I will make it worth your while when the fight is over. Is the way plain before us?"

"Nothing in the way but fallen logs and brush," replied the man. "You had better move on."

No sound was heard as they fell into position for the charge. The line was formed, and at the word of command they strained forward like tigers about to spring upon their prey, when from all sides a circle of fire streamed out upon them, and the sharp crack of rifles and defiant shouts told them that the Whigs were on the alert and ready to meet them,

man to man. Verney turned like a tiger upon the guide, but, as he did so, he saw him discharge his rifle into the bushes, and then, throwing up his hands, fall upon his face. Whether he had been a traitor or not was bootless now, for he was down, and the fight had commenced.

"Forward!" cried Verney, his voice ringing out like the blast of a trumpet. "Charge, my gallant fellows! Let no man say that we have turned our backs."

With their gallant young leader at their head they sprang boldly forward towards the island, but reeled back as they were met by a determined fire from behind a rampart of fallen trees, with the branches pointing in every conceivable direction. Behind this lay the dreaded Southern riflemen pouring in volley after volley with inconceivable rapidity, and with an accuracy of aim only known among the dead shots who have lived by the rifle. A perfect hailstorm of bullets met them at every turn. From tree-tops, from behind fallen logs and tangled fern, the deadly bullets sped and the Britons began to tremble. Yet they fought with a courage and determination worthy of the enduring Anglo-Saxon race, from whence they sprung. Though surrounded and shot down by invisible foemen, they made charge after charge, but were as often repulsed, until, by a desperate effort, they broke through the *chevaux-de-frise* of branches and gained the island camp. But, here they had no protection, and the grievously decimated band looked about them in vain for a shelter. Not an enemy was in sight, but the bullets still hissed, and man after man bit the dust before the terrible fire.

"We have been betrayed!" cried Verney, as he sunk exhausted upon one knee. "Cunningham, where are you?"

"Here," cried the major, who had been fighting like a lion. "That thrice-accursed guide has deceived us."

"He has fallen," said Verney. "He was shot down first of all."

"Served him right," growled the major. "Let us make a rush and gain the swamp. That alone can save us, for we are in a trap."

CHAPTER IX.

THE FATE OF THE LOYAL SCOUTS.

He had scarcely spoken when they heard the rush of coming steeds, and from all sides the mounted riflemen of Forrest came down upon them. The sight was too much for most of the Tories of Cunningham, who saw no mercy for them in the blazing eyes of the Whigs, and with wild cries of consternation they broke and fled, leaving the little knot of dismounted cavalry to contend with their opponents. Grievously decimated by the close fire of the Whigs, the cavalry threw themselves into a square, and menaced the Whigs with their sabres and pistols, the latter nearly useless to them, for most of the cavalry had left their ammunition with the horses.

"Stand up boldly, boys!" shouted Verney. "The cowardly loyalists have deserted you, but at least die game, if die we must."

"I am with you!" cried Cunningham, and turning his head Verney saw that the loyalist was in the square, his hard face fiercely set, and his eyes shining like stars in the night.

"Thank you, Cunningham!" said Verney. "You at least are not like your cowardly men."

"If I can get in but one blow at yonder devil," screamed Cunningham, pointing with his sabre to the figure of Forrest as he rode up and down his line, forming it for a charge, "I will die contented."

" You hate him, then ? "

" Hate him ! How tame that word sounds to me now. Across my path at every turn he comes like my evil genius. Everything I undertake fails through the action of himself or his minions. Even now I believe that we have all been cheated, and that this deserter who led us into the trap was one of his men."

" I suspected him," hissed Verney, with hard-set teeth. " The devil he has served, carry him to everlasting flames if this is true. But, I saw him fall."

" It may be true," said Cunningham. " Hah ! here comes Forrest with a flag. Now I could shoot him down like a dog without remorse or pity. Curse him, oh, curse him ! I hate him with a deadly hatred." And he raised a pistol menacingly.

" Put down your hand !" commanded Verney, sternly. " What, do you mean to shoot a man under a flag ? It would be murder, and I will never allow it."

Forrest rode close to the square, reining in his horse about ten feet from the sabre-points.

" I wish to treat with the commander of this party," he explained.

The square opened, and Verney stepped out, and the two gallant soldiers met in the full glare of the camp-fires. Certainly, two nobler specimens of manly grace and strength rarely stood face to face. Verney sunk his sabre-point to the earth in courteous recognition of the salute of Forrest, and waited for him to speak.

" You see our preparations, my dear sir," he said. " You have done nobly, considering the surprise, but you can do no more. I ask for your surrender."

" For what reason ? "

" Many reasons, good ones. You stand here upon good charging-ground with a body of dismounted cavalry, necessarily clumsy while on foot. Opposed

to you is a larger force of the best horsemen in the world, knowing every inch of ground, and capable of taking advantage of that knowledge. You are armed with sabres and useless pistols; we have rifles, ammunition in plenty, and can use our sabres well. Need I say more?"

"The odds are in your favour," admitted Verney. "I grant that, but I cannot go back to Rawdon and say that the mission he has entrusted me with has been so bungled by me."

"Through no fault of yours," added Forrest. "I myself will certify to that. I will inform you that every movement you have made has been watched from the moment you first entered the swamp. A dozen scouts have accompanied you on both sides, and while you were crossing the river, they were making ready to receive you."

"You have good spies, Captain Forrest," said Verney, with a sort of groan. "What terms do you offer us?"

"The best possible. You shall keep your side-arms, as shall the other officers, and be released on parole. The privates and non-commissioned officers shall be retained as prisoners until exchanged. In this I make no reservation, save in the case of a man I see among you, with whom I can make no terms."

"To whom do you refer?"

"To me, to me!" cried the Tory major. "Ten thousand curses on him, he can hate as well as I."

"You must include Major Cunningham in these proposals, Captain Forrest," said Verney, firmly, "or I shall not be at liberty to entertain them. The major has faithfully served my king, and is entitled to protection."

"My men would not suffer it, Lieutenant Verney, you do not know the character of the man you

would shield. His black heart is capable of conceiving and executing the most dreadful crimes. I know of what I speak, and will not include him on any terms with honourable officers like yourself."

"Do not give me up to them, Verney," whispered Cunningham. "They all hate me, and would murder me because I am faithful to the king."

"It is false, Tory!" retorted Forrest. "There are a hundred blackened roofs along these rivers where honest men lived happily until your time. There are as many families houseless and homeless through your means, and many a man mouldering in the dust who might be striking good blows for the cause but for you."

"Fair fight," cried Cunningham. "They were killed in fair fight."

"I do not speak of those who died in battle, but of those you hunted down with hounds, torn from the arms of loving wives and children, and hanged in sight of their own blazing dwellings. There are men 'yonder force,' he added, pointing to his troops, who would not miss this opportunity for their ves."

"Doubtless, what you say is true, Captain Forrest," admitted Verney. "I have heard many evil reports of the band of Cunningham, but he bears the ng's commission, and there was law and warrant r what he did. You must not use it against him re."

"You must not attempt to dictate terms to us, eutenant Verney. I have told you what you may eet, and give you five minutes to consider, and return to my force. If you agree to my terms, put a white flag. If not, you shall hear from

wheeled to ride back, Cunningham sprung

forward and fired at him before anyone could interfere, and they saw the cap which Forrest wore turn round on his head as the bullet tore through it.

"Coward!" he cried, shaking his hand at the baffled Tory. "Look to yourself, for a terrible retribution awaits you. If another shot is fired from that square, Lieutenant Verney, we will not give quarter."

"You must not hold me responsible for a cowardly act," said Verney, with a look of scorn at Cunningham, who was now trembling in every limb. "I warned him, but he would not take my warning."

The troop of Forrest had ridden forward some paces at the sound of the pistol, but as they saw that their leader was uninjured, they raised a shout of delight and halted again; and he met them, and reined in his horse at their head, while the British officers held a hasty conference.

"Now, gentlemen," screamed the Tory, in the most abject terror, "do not think of giving me up to them. They would murder me without remorse."

"By heaven, you deserve it, Major Cunningham," said Verney. "To fire upon the bearer of a flag has ever been regarded as the act of a dastard, and as such I regard it. You are at liberty to take what notice you please of that remark."

"But think, gentlemen, think what you do. In yonder force are men who know not the word mercy, whose hearts are hard as millstones, and who hate me because I have been zealous in the cause. I am ready to take my chance of death in an honourable way, but to die disgraced! Are you cowards, then! Fight like men and let us cut our way through these ragged thieves and gain the swamp. Once there, defy the best of them to take me."

"Do you think that you would be safe in the swamp, then?" asked Verney.

"Ay; let me get there once and the best of them cannot find me. I know the swamp by heart."

"Be that the way, then. We will open the square and let you run, and perhaps you can gain the swamp without being noticed. As for us, we will surrender, for all chance of success is cut off by the desertion of your men."

The men in the rear of the square stepped out, and, tightening his belt, the major crossed the opening in three long leaps and was gone like a shadow. But there were many eyes upon him, and his rush was greeted by fierce cries of rage.

"After him, Davis, Boyd, and Fenton," cried the voice of Forrest. "Take him, dead or alive. The rest of you close up, and we will give these Britons a taste of Yankee steel."

The sabres were out, and the band had commenced a slow trot when a flag was hung out in front of the British square, and Verney came out again to meet them.

"We have concluded to accept your terms, sir," he said, "and I hereby surrender the troops at my disposal to you. I beg that you will see after my wounded, for I fear that too many of them need help. Have you a surgeon?"

"Certainly, and he has been at work for half-an-hour; those are his torches which you see moving through the woods yonder. I do not take it kindly that you allowed that scoundrel to escape, lieutenant."

"I could do no less, as you announced your intention to allow him no terms."

"Very true. However, the men who are on his trail will make it a hot one for him. Keep your sword, sir. You at least know how to use it. Ensign Throop, see after the prisoners and put them in the guard-house. No attempt at escape will be

tolerated for a moment. Orderly, take these officers to my quarters and let my boy give them some refreshments. They certainly need it, after such a fight as this, and I have no time to attend to them, for there is work to do in the swamp."

"May I ask what that is, captain?"

"To hunt down and exterminate the ruffianly banditti who came here with you, lieutenant. It is a shame for honourable men to consort with such scoundrels."

Verney shrugged his shoulders in an odd way.

"We must obey orders, captain. They are not saints upon earth, but, nevertheless, are useful in their way."

"And their way is burning houses, stealing chickens, and murdering innocent men," said Forrest. "There, go with this man, gentlemen, and he will attend to your wants. In the morning I will see you again, and arrange affairs to your satisfaction. Good-night."

The soldiers were crowded into one of the cabins, under a strong guard. The officers were cared for in Forrest's quarters, and the wounded were carefully attended. All through the night shots and shouts were heard, as the Whigs pursued the scattered Tories through the mazes of the swamp. The history of that night was a fearful one in the annals of the Loyal Scouts. Here and there, years after, through the swamps, their bleaching bones were found imbedded in the ooze and slime, where they had fallen by the avenging steel or bullet.

Many escaped, of course, favoured by the darkness and their knowledge of the paths through the swamp, but by far the greater portion were overtaken and met the fate they had so mercilessly meted out to others. Fearful deeds were done that night under the dark arches of the giant trees.

There were men in either band who had some deep and deadly wrong to avenge—who had thought of nothing else for years, and now had the opportunity, long sought and wished for in vain.

Here, armed with swords only, bleeding at every pore, two men fought for life or death who had been foster-brothers and drawn their sustenance from the same bosom, until one was pierced to the heart, and the other dropped bleeding upon his body. There, a desperate man, surrounded by many foes, fought like a very fiend, and was overpowered by numbers. Now and then a desperate band of six or eight would meet as many Whigs thirsting for their blood, and fought until the clash of weapons brought other enemies upon them, and they were cut down one by one.

And where was Cunningham? Hunted like the beast of the forest, he took his course by devious ways, over fallen logs, splashing through slimy pools and scaring the owls from their hiding-places in the thick branches.

He had seen at the outset that to make for the river now would bring him in the track of the pursuing Whigs, and he plunged deeper and deeper into the dismal swamp, muttering fervent maledictions on his enemies as he went. At last, worn out, he reached a little sheltered island, and dropping exhausted on the green turf listened intently.

Far away in the distance, he could hear the crack of rifles, and knew that his band were being cut off in detail by the Whigs, and a fierce rage against the partisans filled his heart. Desperate as to his own fortunes, his one thought was to live long enough to avenge himself upon one of the enemy, and then die, if must be, with his face to the foe. What a change had taken place since he set out, fired by the hope of vengeance, and accepted the guidance of the traitor Whig into the swamp!

Ha! what was that? He heard the footsteps of a single person making his way slowly and cautiously toward the island. Could it be that, in spite of the darkness, his enemies had tracked him?

The sounds ceased, and though he listened intently, they were not repeated. He crept into the bushes and waited, but one by one even the distant sounds of combat died away and nothing was heard save the usual sounds of the swamp retreat.

"I am getting sleepy," he muttered. "Ah-h-h. I don't think they can find me here. I need rest, but I must not sleep—must not sleep. Oh, curses on the head of Forrest! That girl, too—that limb of the Fletchers: once let me get out of this, and I will take a revenge which will make them tremble when they hear the name of Cunningham—the name of—ah."

He was asleep, and remained locked in that strange slumber for hours. He came to himself with a start, and peering through the bushes he was startled to see a man lying asleep on the sod not ten feet away. Raising himself so as to get a view of the features, a thrill of terrible joy passed through his frame, as he saw that it was the Whig deserter, who was supposed to have fallen in the beginning of last night's affray.

CHAPTER X.

THE QUICKS AND EXCHANGE.

THE three men who had pursued Major Cunningham through the swamp had lost sight of him in the darkness but kept upon his trail, and when he was away from the scene of combat they could trace him by the sound of his feet, although they could not see him. Even then, they found it impossible to close upon him, for the Tory was cunning and knew

what to do to baffle his pursuers. He had been tracked at last almost to the small swamp island and here they lost all trace of him and lay down to wait for morning, when they meant to strike the trail again and follow him until all hope of his recapture was over. They lay down to rest not far away, little thinking that the man they sought was close at hand, sleeping upon the hard earth. He saw nothing except the face of Goodwin, whom he knew as his betrayer, and his hand crept cautiously into his bosom and came out armed with a long, keen-bladed knife.

"Ha, *you* would, eh?" he muttered. "You are the lad who had been abused by Forrest and left him. You are the innocent bird that wanted revenge and didn't know what had become of the horses."

Even while the thoughts passed through his brain he moved forward with stealthy tread, his hand holding the gleaming knife. Armed in this way he pounced suddenly upon the sleeping Whig, who, when he awoke, saw the fierce face close to his and the eyes blazing with lurid hate.

"Don't move a finger, you accursed traitor," he hissed, "or I'll cut your heart out. I've got you, and I'll make you pay for all."

"Why, meejer," said Goodwin, "this is good. So you got away, did you? Get up; and what in thunder do you hold *me* for? I must say that you and Verney are the jealousest critters I ever see in all my life."

"Silence, you dog! The time has gone by when you can deceive us in this way. You have led us astray and are now in pursuit of me and you are a dead man."

Goodwin, realising that he was in danger, made a violent effort, nearly succeeding in throwing off his

enemy, but he recovered himself by a quick motion and pinned the arms of the scout to the earth, kneeling on them with both knees.

"What are you going to do?" gasped the scout. "I do not understand this."

"You will understand it in a moment," cried the Tory. "Here; turn over on your face, and take care that you don't try to get up, or I'll drive the blade into your black heart."

Goodwin obeyed, and the Tory, strapped his hands tightly behind him with his sword-belt. He then tied his feet, and rising, looked down at him with a bitter smile.

"You are safe, I think, my brave fellow, and now to business, since it must be so. Do you know what I am going to do with you?"

"I don't know nor I don't care. I am in your hands to do with as you choose, and I'll die game. Did I desert my colours? No, by heavens, for I was true to my country through all. Whether I did my work well, no one can answer better than yourself."

"You confess it, then?"

"Confess it! I glory in it, and am prouder of it than anything I ever did. Beales and I are dear friends, and have hurt the Loyal Scouts more than any two men in the Carolinas, and Beales will live to avenge me. Do your worst."

"Look you, my boy," said Cunningham, tapping him on the breast with the point of the knife, "it wasn't necessary for you to say any more, as I can see. You have done enough to earn any death, and I'll try to study out a good one. I know this island well, and on the other side at the root of the large pine is a quicksand. I see by your eye that you know it and understand me."

"Oh, my God, don't do that, meejor. Drive the

dagger into my heart, and I'll forgive you, but that is too horrible."

"I am going to take you, bound as you are, and lay you on that sand, and sit by and watch you while you die."

"Help, help!" shouted Goodwin. "Here, boys, here. It is Charley Goodwin calls for aid. Help, help, help!"

The voice rung out with startling distinctness through the woods, and with a bitter curse the major lunged himself upon the prisoner and tried to muffle his mouth in the cape of his coat. In the effort Goodwin got a finger between his strong teeth and hung on until the bones cracked under the terrible pressure. The man uttered a howl like a wild beast, and, catching up a heavy knot, struck Goodwin a stinging blow in the face and released his hand. Goodwin fell back senseless, and in this condition he was dragged to the other side of the island, where there was a treacherous expanse of greyish sand, perhaps twenty feet across. Lifting the struggling form of Goodwin in his arms, for he was already beginning to recover consciousness, the ruffian ran it upon a log which stretched half across the quicksand and laid him down upon the sand, face foremost, and then sat down to watch, and the first thing that the unfortunate man saw when he recovered consciousness, was the vindictive face of Cunningham looking down at him, full of demoniac glee. He was conscious that he was lying upon a bed which would be fatal to any man, no matter if his hands were free. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, he began to sink, and seeing his danger he began to shout again, at the top of his voice, for his companions.

'Curses on you; wolves tear your throat, why

“didn’t I gag you? Shut up, or I will murder you,” cried Cunningham.

The man only answered by renewed cries. “This way, help there! Forrest’s men to the rescue!” and like shouts mingled with the shrill whistle of Forrest’s men. He was desperate and cared nothing for the threats of the Tory, and almost hoped that he would end his agonies by driving the knife into his heart. At the same time Cunningham knew that these cries might bring help, and he dared not step upon the quicksand to make an end of them, neither could he reach his prisoner from the log, for in his struggles Goodwin had worked so far from the log that his enemy could but just touch his clothing. Goodwin was making the woods ring with his cries as he felt himself sinking deeper and deeper in the treacherous sand.

“I’ll fix you,” hissed the Tory, “if you will insist on dying by my hand.”

He ran back to the island and found a flat piece of pine which had been cut from a great tree by one of the choppers. This he threw down upon the sand between the log and Goodwin, and placing one foot upon it, bent forward with uplifted steel. As he did so the piece of wood slid suddenly away, and he was flung out upon the quicksand beyond Goodwin, with much force. He started to his feet, and as he did so both feet sunk to the ankles in the sand. He was caught in his own trap.

As this fearful truth dawned upon him, he attempted to throw himself down, but his feet were so firmly set, and he struggled up again with an appalling cry.

“Oh, I’m in the sand,” he screamed. “Goodwin do something for me, help me.”

“I can’t,” said Goodwin, whose cries had ceased.

and who was regarding his enemy quietly, and exulting in his terrible situation. "You've tied me too tight. If my hands was free, now, I might roll to the log, for I'm not sunk very deep yet."

"I'll free you," said the major, and bending forward he cut the straps upon the hands and feet of the scout. "There; do your best and try to save me."

Goodwin, without attempting to rise, unbuttoned his hunting-shirt and slipped his hands out of the sleeves, thus leaving nothing but his lower limbs in the sand, and these not very deep. When this was done, he made an effort and managed to free his limbs from the sand, and then rolled quickly toward the log. With a cry of delight Goodwin laid his hand upon the log, and raised himself to a sitting posture, and then, grasping a projecting knot with both hands, he dragged himself out of the quicksand and seated himself upon the log, breathing hard, but safe.

"Here we are," he said, looking at Cunningham. "Safe and sound."

"Yes, yes; do something for me. I am sinking deeper every moment."

"Are you? That is just the way I felt about it myself, meejor. How do you like it as far as you've got?"

"Do you mean to help me?" screamed Cunningham.

"Well, I haven't hardly figured it out, as yet," replied Goodwin, with a grim smile. "I sort o'reckon you didn't show me much mercy."

"Didn't I set you free, liar; say, did I not?"

"Well, yes, you did, but it was after you was in the trap, and you know'd you had no chance. You seem to have forgot how you came to fall in thar. If the chip hadn't slipped you would have put the steel through my heart."

"You drove me wild or I wouldn't have tried it," pleaded Cunningham. "Oh, save me, Charlie Goodwin. I ain't fit to die—you know I am not."

"You didn't think of that when *I* was lying in the sand," said Goodwin. "What's the odds how you go under, you Tory thief? If I was to pull you out now I don't s'pose but what the boys would hang you when I brought you to the camp."

"Never mind that, Goodwin; I'll take my chance on the hanging. A hundred things may happen to save me from that, and this is too terrible. Quick; there is no time to waste."

"No, I'll be cursed if I'll help you," said Goodwin, rising, and beginning to crawl along the log to the shore. "You deserve to die, and I won't raise a finger for you."

"Goodwin, for the love of God, give me help. You should not do wrong because I have."

"I didn't think of that," muttered the Whig. "Hold up, meejer; throw me that knife, and I'll do what I kin."

The major, by this time well above his knees in the slime, threw the knife ashore, and the Whig ran to a trailing vine and cut off a stout piece, perhaps ten feet long, one end of which he threw to his late adversary.

"Ketch hold of that," he cried, cheerily. "We'll have you out of that in something less than a pig's whisper. Throw yourself on your back, and hang on like grim death."

The Whig laid the other end of the vine over his shoulder, and bent his muscles to the work. He knew better than to pull too strong at first, for he was aware of the fearful tenacity of a quicksand. The muscles on his shoulders stood out like cords, and the imprisoned limbs of the Tory seemed likely

to be torn from their sockets, and yet the sand would not loosen its hold.

"Pull, pull!" cried the Tory; "you started me that time."

Goodwin tugged again with all his strength, and was about giving up in despair, when he heard a shout not far away. He answered it by a shrill whistle, and immediately after three men leaped down the island, who proved to be the ones who had followed in pursuit of the Tory major, and who had been separated from him in the darkness, and had just struck the trail and were following it.

"Hi! there, Charley!" cried the foremost. "Caught a porgy, eh?"

"Yes," replied Goodwin, grinning; "and I can't haul him out."

The others laid hold of the vine, and by the exertion of all their strength they dragged the major out upon the solid ground, gasping for breath, and only half alive.

"Who is it?" asked Boyd. "How the snakes did ye get in there? Hu! it's Cunningham, as sure as you are alive. Lynch him!"

"No, no," protested Goodwin. "It won't do; we must take him to camp."

"It won't make much difference," said Boyd; "for ye will never get out of the camp alive. There are too many injuries to avenge. Come, stand up, you black scoundrel, and come with us."

He rose at the word, ghastly pale, but not with fear; for he turned a look of wild hate upon the faces of his captors.

"Look at us like that again, and into the quick-and you go, and you don't come out again," roared Boyd.

"You do well to threaten a man half-dead," replied

the Tory, fiercely. "Take me away, for I am ready to go."

They led him away through the swamp, and, after some hours of tedious marching, began to come upon the relics of the last night's struggle. Here and there they saw the bodies of men half-naked, left to rot on the spot where they had fallen. The major perceived, with a pang, that most of them were from his own troop, and his agony showed itself in his face.

"They will never rob or murder more," was Goodwin's consoling reminder.

"Their fate is better than mine," was the reply. "I have little to hope for."

They reached the island, and the prisoner was led at once into the presence of Forrest, who was at breakfast.

"Aha, boys! you have trapped the fox, have you? My worthy friend, I need not say how glad I am to see you."

"I demand the treatment of a prisoner of war," said Cunningham.

"Doubtless. You have great claims upon the leniency of our Whigs," replied Forrest, "and most of all upon mine. Take him away and put him under guard. Give the men orders that if he stir hand or foot, he is to die upon the spot."

He was led away, and, heavily-ironed, was thrust into confinement. As he passed along, he was met by scowling looks from many he had injured, and it was with difficulty that they got him safe to the guard-house.

A meeting of officers was called that night, and court-martial held. Perhaps there was no law to back them in their acts, but when we consider the bloody character of the man upon whom they sat i

judgment, and the repeated injuries he had done to the Whigs, they were not so much to blame. He was condemned to be shot at early morning, in the presence of the whole force.

He received the sentence with sullen indifference, and remained crouching in the corner, never raising his head. They left him to make his peace with God, if he could, and the guard was instructed to watch him closely. At midnight, when all the camp was at rest, they were startled by a terrible cry. Every man sprang up in alarm, thinking that the enemy was upon them. They found the door of the guard-house open, and upon the threshold, with his own bayonet buried in his heart, lay the sentry of the night, stone-dead, while the man who was sentenced to die next day had escaped, and all pursuit was in vain.

CHAPTER XI.

BILL BEALES MAKES A CONVERT.

WE left the rescued spy, Bill Beales, moving through the passage in the earth, guided by the faithful slave who had aided him to escape. Above him in blissful unconsciousness of anything wrong, the British officers slumbered, and the sentry assiduously guarded an empty cage. The passage ended in a flight of steps leading to a wooden partition, in which was a sliding panel, dexterously concealed from view. Pushing this aside, the scout found himself in the cellar of the large cattle barn, through the open doorway of which he caught a glimpse of the blue sky, and knew that liberty was before him. "I orter have a hoss, boy," said he, touching the negro on the arm. "Them thieves have got mine." "You better not try it, Marse Beales," said the negro. "Dar's a sentry at de barn-doah."

"Ain't thar a back stable-door, Cato?"

"Iss, ob course dar is. But don't you try for git dem hosses. You be cotched, suah as you lib, if you does."

"I reckon I'll have to take the chances," said Beales. "I'm a poor, forsaken, desolate critter without a hoss, and I see'd one to-day that would be wu'th a fortin to me if I could only git my hands on him—a big bay, with a white blaze in his forehead."

"Foh de Laud, Marse Beales, dat's de *gin'ral's* hoss, dat is!"

"What, Rawdon?"

"Iss he be."

"Then I'm *bound* to hev him—thar! A man ain't to be expected to resist a temptation like that, and by the mighty, I'm a-goin' fur that hoss? Whar is he?"

"I ain't gwine to tell ye, dat's a fac', Marse Beales. Missee Margit neber forgib me ef you was to be took ag'in, and you be took, sartin suah, if you was to try it. Now you come along wid me."

"I kain't do it, Cato," said the scout. "Tain't possible for me to go away without that hoss. You don't know how I hanker arter him."

"Den you goes alone, Marse Beales, an' dis chile is gwine ter git back to de house. I 'spec's I'll have to turn de key on ye ag'in befoh morning."

Thus grumbling, Cato retreated into the passage and closed the panel after him, and Beales stood alone in the cellar, peering out into the stable-yard.

"It's resky," he muttered—"mighty resky, but it's got to be done. Now that stable-guard is on the other side, I reckon, and if I kin git in, I'll resk it but I git the hoss easy enough. I guess I'd better take a peep at the guard fust."

He darted quickly across the yard and lay down

in the shadow, close to the wall, and listened. There was no sound of footsteps, and he knew that if the guard were there he was either lying down or standing at ease, and he began to crawl by slow degrees along the wall until he reached the corner.

Reaching it, he listened again, and could hear a steady breathing, such as a man makes only when he is enjoying refreshing slumber. He protruded his head cautiously and saw the man lying on his back across the platform by which the barn was entered, with his head propped against the boards, sound asleep.

A grin appeared upon the face of the scout, and he rose to a stooping posture, and making two long, silent strides, clapped his hand upon the nostrils and mouth of the sleeping man, at the same time flourishing a knife before his eyes.

The man at once awoke, and seeing the threatening attitude of the scout, with great good sense refrained from crying out, and suffered himself to be bound and gagged, without a murmur. When this was done, the scout signed to him to rise, and led him to the back-door of the barn.

"Now, see here, my man," he said, "some of them pesky Tory riders stole my hoss, and I've got to have another. I've set my heart upon one with a white blaze in his forehead, and you'd better give him to me unless you want to go under. Will you?"

The man nodded his head, but could not speak, for obvious reasons.

"Now, I wouldn't make any noise, if I was you," said Beales, "because, if you did, I should be under the painful necessity of sticking a knife in you. But as you look like a man of sense, I don't reckon you'll try it. Is thar anyone in the barn?"

The prisoner shook his head vehemently.

"Because, if thar is, it will go mighty hard with you. I'll open the door, and we'll go in and look round to see what we kin see."

He easily forced the staple from the soft pine, and entered the stable, pushing his prisoner before him. The man appeared to act in good faith, for he at once pointed out the charger of Rawdon, which was the second from the door. The first one was a powerful black, nearly equal to the one upon which the scout had set his heart.

"I'll have to take 'em both," muttered Beales. "Oh, Lord, yes; I kain't resist it, and I only wish Charley Goodwin was here, and as sure as you live we'd have four. Say, sojer, won't it go mighty hard with you in the morning?"

The prisoner nodded gravely.

"Then s'pose you jine me and come into Forrest's troop? We'll give you plenty of sarvice and glorious pickings, and you'll like it mighty well. They will shoot you if you stay. What say, now?"

The prisoner pointed to the gag, and signified that he would like to have it removed.

"You won't holler, eh? Because, ef you do, I'll cut your throat from ear to ear."

The prisoner signified that he accepted the condition, and the scout removed the gag.

"All right, friend," said the guard. "I'm sick of this service, anyhow, and will go with you gladly. Hadn't we better take *two* horses apiece?"

"Give me your word of honour as a man that you'll stand by me and I'll loose your hands."

"I give it freely," said the man. None of our Irish boys have much heart in the king's service, I tell you, and these horses are a mighty great temptation. I give you the word of one who was once an Irish gentleman never to be unfaithful to you."

There was no mistaking the hearty tones of his voice; the scout cut his bonds, and the two led out four of the best horses, and secured saddles and trappings for all. This done they led them carefully out upon the plantation, through the gaps in the hedges, which had been thrown down by Cunningham's men during their occupation of the place, and quickly put half a mile between them and the house.

"Where is your Captain camped, comrade?" asked the deserter. "I heard something about an expedition going against him, to-night."

"Have they gone?"

"Bless your heart, they have done their work by this time. It must be near three in the morning."

"About that, I should say. Mout I ask your name, my friend?"

"George Fleming. I'm an Irishman, you know, and Irishmen don't take very kindly to Englishmen, anyhow. I am on the right side now, and I'll stay there, for it won't do for me to be taken."

"That's true, Fleming. My name is Beales, Bill Beales, and I'm sergeant in Forrest's troop."

"I have heard of you. How did you get out of the house?"

"That I kain't say, because I don't know that them that helped me would like to have it told. Mount and away, for we've got a goodish stretch to ride before we kin draw bridle. Did you hear any firing in the swamps to-night?"

"Yes, about an hour ago, I should say. It sounded in that direction," said Fleming, pointing toward the swamp.

"Then they have been at it; but I'll bet they didn't ketch Forrest napping. Foller me."

He took a course through the plantation, avoiding

the main road for some miles, then riding out upon it. They kept in this road for half an hour, and then struck off through a bridle-path which led to the east. After a toilsome ride they came to the door of a cabin, bowered in by vines and trees, and the scout, without dismounting, rapped hastily with his knife-hilt upon the oaken door. As he did so, it swung open, and a boy, perhaps fourteen years old, holding a light rifle in his hand, appeared in the doorway.

"Good boy, Tommy!" said Beales. "Always ready, I see. What's the good word for last night?"

"Bully!" replied the boy. "They took a drive at the capt'in in the swamp, but he got word in time, and the way he licked them Tories and red-coats was a sin to snakes. Hullo—*that's* a red-coat!"

"He's goin' to turn his coat, my boy," said the scout. "I s'pose you tried a pop at them Tories, maybe?"

"I reckon! You don't s'pose they was goin' to fight a battle under my nose, and me never hear of it? The wust of it is, Cunningham got away, though pesky few of his men did."

"The devil! Where is he now, do you s'pose?"

"He's in the swamp some'rs, you bet. He ain't had time to git out in the dark."

"Well, I reckon we'll get down. I s'pose you kin git us something to eat, Tommy?"

"Got plenty of eggs and bacon, and I'll cook you a pot of hominy in no time. Mother's away to uncle's, for I wouldn't let her stay here when the Tories was so thick. It ain't safe, you know."

"That was right, my boy. Git us something to eat, while we hitch the hosses."

They took the confiscated steeds into the bushes and tied them securely. When they came back the boy had made up a fire and was frying eggs and

bacon, while a pot of water was heating on the hocks for the hominy.

"You don't mean to tell me that yonder boy fights against veteran troops?" said Fleming.

"Don't I?" replied Beales. "You orter see him shoot, and then you wouldn't wonder. I'd trust his rifle, for a long shot, better than any rifle in Rawdon's army."

"Then you can't be beaten," exclaimed the Irishman. "When you have such women as that lady at headquarters, and such boys as this, it isn't possible to beat you, and I'm a rebel, heart and soul, from this hour."

The boy looked up from his work with a laugh.

"I know'd you could convert him, if anyone could," he observed. "See here; I've looked at this man and he'll do. You take my word for it, he'll do. See if my words don't prove true."

"You may take that as a great compliment from Tommy," laughed the scout, as he drew a chair up to the table, upon which the boy had placed a large platter of eggs and bacon, with some dry plates containing corn bread and vegetables. "Draw up, sir, draw up! Never mind the hominy now, Tommy, we are too hungry to wait."

They fell to, with a relish, and the savoury fare disappeared rapidly, while the boy poured coffee for them, and seemed pleased that they enjoyed his cookery.

"I shall leave you here, to-day, Fleming," said the scout, as he finished his meal and pushed back from the table. "I have some business to do in which I do not need a companion, and shall not be back before to-morrow morning. Tommy will give you a bed and see after your wants, and if unwelcome visitors come, no one knows the swamp better than

he does. I must have a couple of hours' rest first, and then I am off."

The boy pulled out some blankets from a closet and threw them down upon the floor, with two featherbolsters, and the two who had been enemies, lay down side by side, and slept until about ten o'clock. Then the scout arose, and leaving Fleming still asleep, and instructing the boy to watch for the coming of the Tories or English, and to get Fleming into the swamp upon the first alarm, he mounted one of the stolen horses and rode away. The day passed and nothing more was heard of him, and the boy beguiled the hours by telling his companion of the wild service he had seen when in Forrest's troop. When night came, they lay down to rest and sleep until morning. Tommy was preparing breakfast, and had been to the spring for a pail of water, when four men, splashed and bloody, came out of the swamp into the thicket where the horses were tied. The foremost among them was Major Cunningham, who uttered a shout of joy as he saw the horses.

"Hurrah! lads, we are all right! Here are horses!"

Tommy darted into the house and directed the deserter to hide, while he caught up his gun and ran out to the grove, which he reached breathless just as the Tories—for they were members of the scouts whom the major had picked up in his flight—were preparing to mount.

"Hold on there!" he cried, levelling his gun. "What are you doing with those horses, say now?"

"By the king!" exclaimed one of the Tories, "it's that imp of the devil, Tommy Beales. Let's hang him up."

"You'll find that easier said than done, boys," observed Tommy, coolly; "seeing that I'll shoot the

first man that lifts a hand. Come off that horse, you half-and-half; come off, I say!"

Cunningham glared at the boy fiercely, but Tommy Beales was not to be looked down; he made no sign of putting down his weapon, but, on the contrary, covered the Tory major in a very determined manner. It is probable that he might have succeeded in scaring them off, but one of the Tories, who had been crouching unseen in the bushes, suddenly rose, and seized the boy from behind, and in the scuffle the gun went off without doing any injury.

"Hang him," ordered the major, quietly. "One less of the brood of Bill Beales in the world. Take that halter and string him up on the first branch."

"Did you say *hang* him, major?" demanded one of the men. "He's only a boy."

"He'll be a man some day if we let him live," was the cool reply. "Up with him."

The men knew better than to disobey their leader when he used that tone, and taking a strap, they made a running noose, and threw it over the head of the boy. He did not beg for his life—he knew the man who had taken him too well for that—but stood calm and pale awaiting his fate, whatever it might be.

"Run him up!" commanded Cunningham, as the end of the strap was thrown over a limb.

The eyes of the lad were fixed upon his face with a strange, intent glance, when a fearful rattling of sabres was heard, and a voice shouted—

"Here they are, boys! Forrest's men, hurrah!"

They knew the voice, and thinking a squadron of cavalry at least threatened them, fled in every direction; and the next moment Beales, followed by Arthur Verney, stepped from the thicket.

"Brave men *they* be," said Beales. Now, lieu-

tenant, I am going to make you a present of a horse. I borrowed from one of them lords at Fletcher's plantation. Here he is."

"Rawdon's horse, as I live!" exclaimed Verney. "You had better keep out of his way, after that."

"I'll try to do that. Now I'll show you the way to Fletcher's, and then leave you."

Two hours after, Verney appeared at Fletcher's, alone, and mounted upon Rawdon's horse, and was received joyfully by the British commander, who had been led to believe that he had fallen, by the report of the cowardly loyalists who had escaped. Rawdon received his horse with a promise to hang Beales if he ever fell into his hands. Next day, before the army marched, Verney had an interview with Margaret.

"There was a time, Miss Fletcher," he said, as he took her hand at parting, "when I hoped—no matter what. I have been a prisoner to a gallant man, who has allowed me to be exchanged, and whom I am proud to call my friend, even though engaged in a bad cause, and he has told me how matters stand between you. What could I do, but withdraw my poor pretensions and wish you every happiness with the man of your choice? I bid you good-bye and shall be proud to think that you look with friendly interest upon my course."

He pressed her hand, the trumpets sounded, farewells were said, and the steady columns of the British army passed southward until the intervening hills hid them from sight.

CHAPTER XII.

THE INTERRUPTED TRYST.

A MONTH passed with many battles and sieges. The tide of war had rolled away from the vicinity of the

Fletcher plantation, and returned again. Nothing had been heard of Cunningham during that time, that could be depended on, although it was rumoured that he was raising another body of men under the same name as those who had been scattered by the band of Forrest, in the country about Ninety-six, where he was well known.

Margaret Fletcher still remained at the plantation, which, although claimed by the agents for sequestered estates, had not yet been sold or given to any of the favourites of the crown, and the family was permitted to remain there on sufferance. Colonel Fletcher was with Greene upon his personal staff, and Forrest had returned from that army but lately and established himself in his old quarters in the swamp.

In the afternoon of a beautiful day Margaret was sitting under the trees in front of the house, reading a letter from her father which had been brought by an American scout, when the gate was opened and eight or ten men, heavily armed, rode up the avenue. She started up in some alarm, for the leading man was Cunningham, who looked at her with a strange smile.

"Ah, Miss Fletcher," he smiled, "I am happy to meet you after this long time; I hope you are well."

She said not a word, but, folding her letter, she concealed it in the folds of her garments and turned to enter the house.

"Stop, Miss Fletcher," he said. "I have something to say to you, and may as well say it now as at another time. Why are you in such haste to leave me?"

"I have nothing to say to you, Major Cunningham," she replied, "nor have you any authority to detain me."

"I have authority, greater than you suppose. I am empowered by the commander of the British forces in this vicinity to root out evil-doers, to quarter myself upon the country, and I have chosen this estate as the basis of operations. You shall see my authority if you doubt my word."

"I have no doubt you speak the truth in this, and I understand the malice which has induced you to come here, of all places in this section. The house is at your disposal, but you cannot compel me to remain in it, I am glad to say."

"You misrepresent my motives," he said, throwing a look of sorrow into his face, "and I am sorry for it. If you will give me a moment of your time I will make such arrangements as shall convince you that I do not wish to do anything ungentlemanly or harsh. May I ask the favour of a word?"

"Certainly, when you ask it in a proper manner."

He alighted and gave his bridle to one of the men and offered her his arm, but she refused it by a quiet gesture. They entered the house and went into the drawing-room, when the first person who met them was the Scotch surgeon, Campbell, who, buried in the depths of an easy-chair, was enjoying a book with great relish. He received Cunningham with a mock politeness which was really amusing.

"Eh, mon!" he cried, "so ye are back again wth us? I ha'na set my cen an ye sin' ye went after the daft chiel, Forrest, intil the swamp. That was a sorry hour, for baith yerself and Verney."

"We were treacherously betrayed by one in whom we put confidence."

"Ye didn't remember the old saying, 'Pit not yes faith in Whigs.' They are unco cattle, they laddies and fight like deevils, ye ken."

"Where is Lieutenant Verney, now, doctor?"

asked the major, attempting to turn the conversation.

"Major, the lad is noo," answered the doctor. "He's had a rise sin' ye foregathered in the swamps. Faith he did his best, but he was sair hampered wi' regards, that night."

"Yes," returned the Tory, bitterly, "and I got nothing but hard words for my share in the dangers of that night—I, who would not surrender but took the chances of flight."

"And good reason ye had, my lad—good reason! They chiefs would have strappit ye up til a tree, an' ye hadn'a made yer escape lucky as ye did. Div ye no think we hear the news, this gait?"

"I have an account to settle with these swamp ~~treas~~," said the major, "and I hope the time is not far distant. I expect to try them again, and this time I shall succeed."

"Na deot, na doot; ivery mon will fash himself' that he can do better anither gait than the last. I ~~idea~~ think ye wa'd come back til this section, though, upon my word."

"I have come back, however. Miss Fletcher, I only intend to have my officers with me in the house, and ten men quartered outside. The rest of my force will be within easy call, but will not depend upon ~~you~~ for subsistence. Will that suit you?"

"I have told you that I have no power to gainsay ~~you~~. If I had, you should not remain in this house for a moment."

"I'll gang awa'," said Campbell, "and let ye and the lassie have it oot, major. Only remember, I've a mighty quick temper, and shall be within call."

He took up his book and sauntered out, leaving ~~the~~ two together.

"I am sorry that you receive me in this manner,"

he remarked after a pause. "I know that I have done wrong with regard to you, and I most sincerely beg your pardon for it."

"That is granted, major, and I am glad you have the grace to confess it."

"Thank you, I was maddened at that time, but have sincerely repented it since. Will you allow me to point out a way in which our families may be reconciled?"

"That can hardly be," she averred, decidedly. "We may forgive you for past wrongs, but ~~nothing~~ more."

"If I had dared to hope that if I could gain your love—if"—

"My love! Major Cunningham, once before ~~you~~ offered me a direct insult, and this is even worse."

"Is the offer of the best love of a man's heart to a woman an *insult*?"

"From a man in your position to a lady in mine, yes, the most deadly you could offer. Silence; I will not hear another word in that strain."

"You must hear me out. I have done work for the crown which will insure the recognition of my rank in the regular service. I can offer you a station of which the most beautiful woman might well be proud, and far better than anything a ~~rebel~~ could offer you. Give me some hope that, in the future, you will look more favourably on my suit."

"You persist in your insults, sir. I shall be forced to call my friend, Doctor Campbell, for aid. He has punished your insolence once, and will be glad to do it again."

"You would do well not to call him," and his tone was one of concentrated malice; "I warn you that it will not be safe, for, if he interferes between us, I shall kill him before your eyes. I have an alibi

grudge against him, and will not lose the opportunity to settle it. Do you refuse to hear me and despise my love?"

"Yes, both you and it. What, I, the daughter of a noble Whig, and the promised wife of another, to listen to your infamous proposals? Leave me, before I forget who I am, and do something which I shall be sorry for."

"I will take you at your word, proud girl, and leave you. Trust me, I had little hope of being able to bend your proud spirit by this means, and have something else in reserve which I doubt not will be more effectual. In justice to myself, I cannot remain under this roof after what has passed, but both yourself and your rebel lover shall have cause to remember William Cunningham. I give you good-day."

He turned and strode from the room, and directly after they heard the clatter of hoofs, as he rode down the avenue, closely followed by his men. The doctor came in directly after, with a smile upon his face.

"Oh, ay!" he said, "the chiel has ta'en his dismissal not ower-kindly, and gauged his gait full of wrath. Ye have made an incemy this day, lassie."

"I know it, Oh, that Forrest were only here!"

"He won't be long away, Miss Maggio, if so be you want him *bad*," remarked a quiet voice.

She turned in surprise, and saw the scout, Beales, who had come into the house from the back.

"Saul o' my body, but it's the callant that stole Laird Rawdon's horse!" roared the doctor. "Do ye no' think shame til yersel', to skelp awa' wi' a laird's horse, that gait?"

"'Twas a shame to leave so many good horses behind, doctor," retorted Beales, seriously, "and I

wouldn't have done if I'd had anyone to help me but the Irishman I convarted. He's a mighty good fighter, that Fleming, and sucks in the breath of the swamps like the air of his native bogs. I'm right glad I convarted him."

"How did you come here, William Beales?" demanded Margaret. "Don't you know that you are in horrible danger?"

"Not a bit of it, Miss Maggie. I see'd them thieves out of sight afore I came near the house. I've had my eyes on them fur half-an-hour, and was mighty glad when they rid away, for they ain't safe critters to have in a house, they ain't. I've come to tell you that we are back in the swamps—the doctor won't tell of us—and that the meejor will be at the old place at seven o'clock. He don't like to come near the house, because he don't want Cunningham to know he's come back until we drop on him. I've left my message and now I'm off."

"Will you not wait for some refreshments, William? I can order them in a moment."

"If you could order a glass of spirits, I'd like to drink your health and the doctor's, afore I put out," replied Beales. "I ain't got time to eat anything now."

"You shall have what you choose to order, sergeant," she said, ringing a bell, which brought up Cato, who grinned widely at the sight of Beales, and disappeared instantly upon receiving an order for a glass of Jamaica, the favourite drink of the South. He came back with a bottle and glass, and Beales took a mighty drink, ducking his head to the lady and gentleman with a rough border formula—"Toward you."

"You will get one of the large demijohns of that liuor and give it to Sergeant Beales," said Margaret

“I have no doubt it will be welcome to his comrades in the swamp. If you can carry it, I will send some wine to the officers.”

“If you kin send one of the boys to carry it to the bay where I tied my horse, I'll see that it gets safe to camp,” replied Beales, “and the boys will drink ~~your~~ health in bumpers.”

“See to it, Cato,” ordered Margaret. “Tell ~~Alvin~~ that I shall be at the place at the time and ~~you~~ must not disappoint me.”

“Disappoint you? Not a bit of it, Miss Maggie. ~~He~~'ll be glad enough to come, and you can't get there ~~any~~ quicker than ~~he~~ will. Now I'll have to dig ~~out~~.”

He bowed awkwardly and hurried away, and soon after was seen crossing the plantation, carrying one demijohn while a negre followed with another of equal size.

“Miss Fletcher,” remarked the doctor, “w'u'd it ~~be~~ skin' too much of you when you see the young man, to mention that the auld Scotch carle they call Campbell wished him well and happy.”

“He will be proud to know that you take an interest in him, though an enemy.”

“An enemy? Ye dinna ken what ye say, lassie. Never an enemy to one who bears the name of ~~Farrest~~. One day I hope to make it plain that no one loves him better than mysel', or would go ~~farther~~ to do him a service.”

“I do not doubt it, doctor. Now if you will go in to dinner with me I can depend upon your escort to ~~this~~ meeting.”

“I doubt if the lad will care for my company,” replied Campbell grinning. “But I know how to ~~call~~ off when the time comes, and I wull do it.”

It was a little after six in the evening when the

two strolled upon the plantation—Margaret taking the lead as one who understood the way better than the doctor. They entered the forest and proceeded by green paths and sequestered shades until they could see before them those tall cypress trees rising above the smaller trees about like sons of Anak among the lesser tribes.

"Yon's the place," muttered the doctor, "I'll wager a bawbee; is it not now? Ah, I see by yer een that I'm right and I'll go no further."

Margaret hurried forward alone and came out in a little sheltered glade in the midst of which the three tall cypress trees stood. A young man in the uniform of a Continental major sprung forward and she threw herself upon his bosom with a glad cry, for it was Edwin Forrest.

"My darling, my darling!" he said. "The days have been long since I have seen you."

She made no resistance as he pressed his lips again and again to hers, but at last withdrew herself blushingly, still suffering him to hold her hand, and gaze into her speaking face in which her delight at meeting him was only too plainly visible.

"And, Edwin," she said, after a long interchange of loving words and glances and they were seated side by side upon a moss-covered log, "I am glad you have come, for another reason. I am doubtful whether I am quite safe now, for Cunningham has returned, and to-day he spoke words to me which I never expected to hear from his lips."

"The black-hearted scoundrel. Tell me what he said, for I am on thorns until I know."

She told him everything, and he listened with many exclamations and threats against the absent Tory. As the story culminated he bounded to his feet in a rage.

“And I was away when he thus insulted you! I will claim a dear revenge from Cunningham for this.”

“Claim it now!” shouted the well-known voice of the Tory leader. “Take him, boys; *alive*, mind you, *alive*!”

There was a rush of men from various parts of the woods. Margaret saw her lover in the centre of a fierce group, with his sword playing like lightning about him, and with incredible valour keeping twenty foes at bay. This could not last long, and she saw him, wounded, disarmed, and bound, standing amid his enemies, while at his feet lay two of the Tories, who would never again follow their leader to scenes of bloodshed. The next moment she was herself seized by Cunningham.

“Away with them,” cried the Tory; “my revenge will soon be complete.”

CHAPTER XIII.

A TERRIBLE FATE.

THE scene changes again to the swamp. It is early morning and the birds are singing joyously in the laden boughs. There is a camp of men in the swamp some miles distant from the island home of Edwin Forrest and his rangers, but these are not the same class of men who follow his lead. Dark-brown and sullen wretches—outcasts from the law and from society, social plagues, men whose faces convict them of being equal to any crime. This is the new force Cunningham has recruited to fill the places of those who had perished on that dismal night attack, a month before, and whose bodies have lain unburied in the swamps ever since. A few of the old band remain, it is true, and all of them have a new cause of hate against Forrest and his men,

and they greet his appearance as a prisoner with shouts of joy.

"We've got another chap you will be glad to see, major," said one of his officers. "Fetch him out, Blinks."

"Who is it?" demanded Cunningham.

"I'll wager a hundred guineas I couldn't name a man except Bill Beales and Forrest, you'd sooner have in your power. Here he comes."

A man heavily ironed, except on the lower limbs, was brought forward, and the major saw that it was Charley Goodwin.

"You are right, Dayton," he exclaimed. "I *am* glad to see this fellow. You see him, boys, don't you? This is the man who joined us at Fletcher's, and betrayed us into the hands of Forrest and his gang on the night when so many good fellows found graves in the swamp. This is the man who caused you to mourn for lost friends and brothers, and who took me back to Forrest's camp, where only my skill in breaking guard saved me from death."

"I won't remind you that I saved you from the quicksand when I might have let you rot," suggested Goodwin.

"The quicksand! Ha! you have put it into my head and I should have forgotten. Ha! ha! boys; hanging is tame. Long life to the quicksand, and let these men find a grave there. What say you?"

A yell of delight burst from the Tory band, eager to join in any new atrocity.

Ferrest looked at Goodwin, and each felt that his fate was sealed.

"And what say you, Margaret Fletcher? What would you do to give your lover freedom?"

"What can I do—what can I say, Cunningham? I beg you, in the name of all you once held holy and

true, to spare these noble men. They have done no wrong, save in fighting bravely for the land of their birth, while you were striking against it. Hear me, I pray you; let us go free, and it will be something in your favour in His great day."

"Bah! I am not sentimental, my dear girl. Now that I have my enemy in my power—the man who has done so much to humble me—I will make my revenge complete. You shall see him die, and within an hour shall be my wife. I swear upon the Cross. There; we waste time. Are the men ready, Dayton?"

"Yes; but all the fellows want to see the fun."

"Somebody ought to keep camp. Premise ten of the men two guineas apiece to do it, and you can get them."

The men were quickly found, and the rest mounted and rode away toward the swamp island where the quicksand lay. A half-hour's ride brought them to it. The horses were tethered, and the party took their prisoners, heavily ironed, from their horses. Not a word of good-bye was suffered, for gags were thrust into their mouths, and in this condition they were flung upon their backs into the treacherous depths of the quicksand, amid the jeers of the Tories.

"Lie there, and as the slimy ooze rises to engulf you, think of me and my revenge. Ha, the lady has fainted. Do not touch her, Dayton, but bring water. Curse you, why don't you make haste? It was a cruel thing to bring her here, after all, for we could have had our revenge without that. Mount and away, all of you, and back to camp. No power can save them now, and we will not waste our time in insulting dying men; away!"

Dayton and Cunningham placed the insensible form of Margaret upon a horse; the major mounted before her, and all rode away, leaving their enemies to die.

by inches in the quagmire into which they had been cast. Long before they reached the camp, Margaret recovered, but only to wring her hands and moan, calling down the vengeance of heaven upon the Tories, and especially upon the head of Cunningham.

"You have found your tongue with a vengeance," growled the Tory, as they reached the camp. "Take her to your wife, Dayton, and tell Justice Blumberg that we shall need him in an hour."

Margaret was led away and placed in charge of the wife of Dayton, a virago, who followed the camp in the capacity of sutler. The poor girl sunk moaning upon a pile of blankets, and covering her face, sought to shut out the vision of her lover perishing, crying in vain for aid, in the dismal swamp. She could not do it. He was ever before her as she had seen him last, when consigned to that awful death. The minutes dragged on; a man appeared at the door and called to Mrs. Dayton and said something to her in a low voice.

"Come out," said the virago. "You are to be married, do you hear? A pretty bride for a man like Cunningham, the born devil! Come out, I say; do you not hear me?"

Margaret arose, with an unnatural brightness in her dark eyes, and followed the woman into the open space before the hut. There she found the troop drawn up in a semicircle, and in the centre Cunningham and Dayton and a stolid-looking German, who looked upon all the proceedings with intense indifference.

Cunningham advanced with a smile, and took her hand. A sort of shudder passed through her frame as she felt the touch, and her other hand stole into the folds of her dress.

"I am sorry that our marriage must be so in-

formal," said Cunningham; "but really, under the circumstances, there was no other course. Let me advise you not to make trouble by resistance, for it will do no good."

"I wish to speak to this justice," she said. "I must speak to him, do you hear?"

"Oh, very good. You shall speak to him if you like. Dayton, ask Justice Blumberg to step this way."

He was an odd-looking man, this justice, and as Margaret saw his face, she lost hope. The major introduced him and then, with a cynical smile, stepped back out of hearing.

"Now lo•k at dis, mine girl," adjured the justice; "it vas no use for you to speak mit me. I cooms here to marry Major Cunningham, un I does it right avay."

"But I do not wish to marry him!"

"Dat makes no difference anyvay. I does vat Major Cunningham deells me."

"I might have known he would choose some stupid, mercenary wretch to do his bidding. I can say no more, but you do not know to what you force me."

The justice signed to Cunningham, and he approached and took her hand again; but, as he did so, something bright glittered in the sun and a rapid blow was struck, before which he staggered back, placing his hand on his bosom. She held in her hand a small, keen knife, which was unstained by blood, and Cunningham laughed fiercely.

"Ha, girl, you would have taken my life! You do not know from what a chain-vest I wear has saved you. Drop that knife, I say!"

She looked wildly about her, and, raising the knife, attempted to plunge it into her own breast. Bu

the point had broken under the fierce blow she had dealt the Tory, and the weapon was wrenched from her hand.

"Now, justice, go on, and be quick. I will tame this tigress before I have done with her."

The justice took his station, and the marriage service began. Before he had spoken a dozen words there was a cry of alarm among the men, and they sprung for their horses; but they were too late. On every side they caught the gleam of sabres, and with wild cries of triumph, the rangers of Forrest poured in upon them. And who led them? Who is this upon the black horse, a naked sabre in his hand, his eyes blazing with fury, and bent only upon Cunningham? Who but Edwin Forrest, redeemed from death! One or two frightened Tories who crossed his track, were cut down; and Cunningham, with a shriek of terror, plunged into the woods, closely followed by the avenger. At the same time the justice, by a quick motion of his hands, threw off the disquising wig and moustache, and revealed the face of Beales the scout. Seizing Margaret in his arms, he carried her to the hut and laid her upon the blankets. Then he rushed out to join in the conquest of the Tory force.

The work was quickly done, and well done, for the rangers did not think of giving quarter; or the scouts of asking it, and in ten minutes the Tory band was a thing of the past. As the last of the frightened fugitives were being pursued through the swamp, Forrest rode back, holding the bloody sabre in his hand.

"Where is she?" he cried to Doctor Campbell, who was standing near the hut. "Let me see her." *

The surgeon pointed to the hut. Forrest flung down his sword and ran in, and the next moment Margaret was in his arms.

“Look up, my love, my darling! You have no longer cause to fear, for Cunningham is dead.”

We pass over the joy of the lovers in thus meeting so unexpectedly, when each thought never again to see the other's face. The surgeon had witnessed, without being able to give aid, the capture of Forrest and Margaret, but, luckily falling in with a member of the Whig troop, had been guided by him to the place where Beales was waiting for the return of his major. Half-an-hour before, they had fallen in with a party from the scouts, and had captured a German justice, who was being conveyed by them to the swamp, for the purpose of performing that unhallowed marriage service, at the command of Cunningham. Beales had many disguises used by him in his scouting expeditions, and the scout very soon converted himself into a pretty fair likeness of the German, borrowing his wig—for the unfortunate man covered the ravages of time under the hair of another—for the purpose of completing his disguise. His knowledge of the German dialect stood him in good stead, and when he reached the camp of the Tories he accounted for coming alone by saying that his guards, after bringing him in sight of the camp, had pursued a man who was passing through the swamp, leaving him to make his way alone. In the mean time the rangers were on the alert, and had watched the motions of the Tories, whose backs were hardly turned upon the treacherous quicksand when the doomed men were set at liberty. Then they had laid the ambush and burst in upon the astonished Tories at the right time, with the result we have seen.

The lovers were still sitting hand in hand when the doctor entered, and both rose to greet him cor-

dially, knowing the part he had taken in giving them this happiness. He advanced joyfully, giving them each a hand.

"I have no words to express my happiness," he said, dropping his Scotch accent, "and now that we are together, I intend to let you into a secret. Major Edwin Forrest, I know your real name."

"You?"

"I! Years ago, you left your father's house in Glasgow, when a mere boy, spurred by the love of adventure, and from that day to this they have never seen your face. Your name Edwin Forrest Campbell. Do you deny it?"

"No; that is my name; but who are you, who know me so well?"

"Do you not know? Ah, I held you when a boy upon my knees, and hoped great things for your future. Look in my face and when I tell you that your name is mine, need I say more?"

"I am bewildered. Something tells me that you have an interest in me, for which I cannot account."

"Then let me speak, Edwin. I am your father, boy, and you the dear son I have lost so many years."

That meeting between father and son, after years of separation, is too holy for any pen. When the first transport was over, and they had severally told all that had happened since their parting, they went out into the open space to attend to the business of the camp.

"I shall go to Charleston at once and resign," said the surgeon. I cannot remain in the service of England when my son is fighting so nobly in the cause of a downtrodden people. This war will end in the complete triumph of the American arms, and when that happy day comes I shall make Carolina

"You do not doubt it, dear father," responded Edwin. "I can read that in your face."

"No, no!" replied the old gentleman; "I do not doubt it. All who were dear to me in my old home are dead, but in my old age I shall find rest and peace in the society of my son and his beautiful wife. I had given up that hope long since, but it has come to me at last."

He kept his word. When the war was ended, and his son had laid down the sword and retired to his plantation, and taken Margaret for his wife, Doctor Campbell came to them and lived happily under their roof. It was his delight to visit at Colonel Fletcher's, and argue with him in the verandah as to the relative merits of England and America. But at heart he was a staunch republican, and was a favourite all through the Camden district.

Arthur Verney returned to England after the war; he sold out of the army, disposed of his estates, and came back to Carolina, where he purchased a plantation near Edwin's, for whom he had a sincere regard. He married a lady of the district, and the two families of the men who had fought hand-to-hand in the struggle for Independence, became firm friends.

From time to time Beales and Goodwin came down from Ninety-six to be hospitably entertained by their old commander, and talk over the battles they had fought, and the victories they had won.

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Extract from CHAPTER CII.

Kelly was careful not to excite the suspicions of Joss too greatly.

He conversed in a bantering way with him, called for drinks, and smoked another cigar.

Mrs. Flynn seemingly took no notice. She appeared absorbed in the multitudinous ramifications of her business.

Presently the clock marked seven.

“Well, Joss, darlint, about that whisky?” she said, with an odd glint of the eye, which Kelly carefully observed.

“You rampagious she cat!” he thought to himself, “if I only had you safe.”

But he simply watched Joss!

Kelly’s object was to induce Joss to walk a few yards with him—to accompany him to a rendezvous, but how to do this had puzzled him sorely.

Morgan, however suggested the means.

He wrote a letter from the “trap” with whom Joss had been in communication, and whose name he managed easily to learn, requesting Joss to meet him at the police-station upon important business.

Kelly managed so that the missive was delivered while he was at the bar, and chuckled with devilish glee as he saw him leave the house in answer to the letter, and walk blindfolded into the pit prepared for him.

“I shan’t be long, Kelly,” said Joss; “will you wait until I come back?”

“I don’t care,” answered Kelly, and reseated himself for a moment.

As soon, however, as the other’s back was turned, he hastily rose and followed him; he took his way down a narrow street which led to the station.

Kelly followed him closely, but cautiously, until he came to a doorway at no great distance from an oystershop.

Kelly whistled, and out darted a party of seamen, who threw a horse-cloth over Joss's head.

Before he could shriek he was secured, and hurried along by his comrades.

It was quite dark, and by exercising great caution they managed to reach the boat that awaited them, into which Joss was bundled, far more dead than alive.

Meanwhile, at the police-station, several officers and some forty policemen had been selected for the expedition.

At first the officials refused to believe in the possibility of such audacity.

That a common bandit and bushranger should have the audacity to seize a vessel and sail round the world with his gang appeared in these modern times incredible.

(Let our readers who doubt this wait until they see what Kelly's brother did in this line, and the correspondence between Victoria and the British Government upon the subject, *vide Times*, July, 1881).

Great was the joy, therefore, of the officers and men, at the prospect of such a wonderful capture.

Eight o'clock came, but no Joss, and the officers became very uneasy.

One of them determined to go down to the oyster-saloon and make enquiries.

Mrs. Flynn was very much alarmed. Her husband had gone out soon after seven.

The chief of the "robbers and thieves" was in the saloon, and he had gone after him.

"The scoundrel has had some hint!" cried the officer, and dashed back to the police-station.

They all rushed to the shore, to see the supposed yacht in the act of sailing out of the bay.

The officers were frantic with humiliation and rage. There was not a single steamer available for the chase ready.

All the men-of-war on the station were absent, cruising at sea.

It was determined, however, to send out a sharp revenue cutter to give warning.

But all felt bitterly disappointed at the failure of their well-laid scheme.

Meanwhile, Kelly and the whole of his band had got on board.

Joss was cast into the hold very tightly secured.

Kelly was determined to exercise a bitter vengeance upon the traitor.

It should paralyse even his own crew.

Now his principal object was to escape from his enemies.

That he would be hotly pursued he could well imagine, and safety was the first law.

A sharp look-out was kept, and then he and his men held a consultation.

Kelly determined to try him by court martial, condemn and hang him.

His associates were enraptured with the idea.

It was an idea suited to their ferocious natures. But for the timely action of Kelly they would all be lying in San Francisco jail.

Had the police but had the sense to keep Joss a prisoner all would have been over with them.

Death, or prison for life, would have been their portion without a doubt.

But they would soon have their revenge on the cowardly traitor who had turned upon his pals.

As soon as breakfast was over Kelly called those

who acted as officers together, and bade some of the men bring Joss in.

A court martial on board a regular ship is a very solemn thing.

If the weather be fine the ship is arranged with the greatest nicety.

The great cabin is prepared with a long table covered with a green cloth.

Pens, ink, and paper, prayer-books and the articles of war, are placed round to each member.

"Open the court," says the president.

In this case Kelly, Zeph, and Salmon Roe constituted the court, while pipes, tobacco, and spirits are placed before them.

The prisoner was brought in. He was deadly pale, and his legs shook under him with fright.

"So, you white-livered cur, you blooming son of a sea-wolf," cried Kelly, in a hoarse voice, "you sold us to the traps, did you?"

"I did not," retorted the trembling caitiff. "I never peached on a pal."

"You lie, you skulking hound," cried Kelly, as he drank off a glass of brandy. "I saw you come down the steps of the station; I heard you tell the trap you'd meet him at eight; I saw your look at your wife, you snivelling cur, going to see about the whisky."

"I tell you, Ned, it's false," faltered Joss. "My wife told me to be civil to the police, and tell 'em to look round; being civil to them don't do no harm."

"You spawn of — fire, you hell-fire cat, you skunk," answered Kelly, and for the benefit of the men who were listening, he told the whole story.

Groans and oaths emanated from all sides; execrations of the most fearful character.

"Now, boys, it's no use having any more palaver," he continued. "Guilty or not guilty?" he asked.

"Guilty!" was roared on all sides.

"And the penalty for peaching is——"

"Death!" replied all who were near.

Joss tried to speak, but he was dragged off to the deck, where during the brief trial all the needful preparations for the fearful execution had been made, but they fell far short of what Ned thought the merits of the case demanded.

Kelly, with a brutal laugh, went down into the cabin, and tossed off a glass to his swift passage to a warm place.

Of course, according to these men and their villainous code, the deed was a just and retributive one.

He had been a traitor to his pals.

Kelly had for some days pondered over the form of death he would inflict upon

"Yon trembling coward who forsook
His master,"

as "My name is Norval" has it.

The yard-arm was too common, shooting was too sudden.

He must be done to death in a way to

"Make the world grow pale,
To point a moral and adorn a tale."

To make him an *auto dese*, to burn him on a pile like an Hindoo widow, to impale him and hang him "alive and kicking," up to the end of the yard-arm like a skewered kidney, there to linger out his days and nights in hopeless agony.

Each of these plans recommended themselves to the bushranger's idea of vengeance and justice.

But each had their objectionable points, and as the

trembling catiff stood before Ned he gave him his choice of the fate he would like best.

"Look here, you miserable, skulking, sneaking viper, I'm kind to you, I am, so we all are. You'd have handed us over to the traps. They wouldn't have been as kind to us as we are to you. They would not have given us the choice of how we'd be scragged. No, not they. Now make your choice. Which will you have—blazes, wood, or water? Look sharp, your time is short. We can't be nice about a hound that would have bitten us all and lapped up the blood-money. Speak, Joss, or I'll give tongue for you, and you'd better not leave that to Ned Kelly, I tell you."

"Roast the traitor who would have murdered us all—who sold his mates! Roast him! roast him!" rattled and roared out all the enraged men, who encircled the pallid, trembling, half-paralysed wretch, whose frightened eyes and quivering frame clearly photographed the apprehension that convulsed him.

He knew the men he stood before.

Their eyes were gleaming with vengeance—their hands eager to wreak it on the body of their would-be assassin. They stood glaring ferociously like wolves upon the shrinking wretch, while Kelly, like the presiding Satan, looked calmly and maliciously on, enjoying the torture that racked the frame of his victim.

Truly it was a scene where

"Hope withering fled,
And mercy sighed farewell."

"Now, then, Joss, speak up; tell the truth now if you never did before. Which shall it be—fire, wood, or water?"

"Mercy—mercy, Ned!" gasped the horrified man.
"Mercy for old times, Ned Kelly!"

"Yes, the mercy you'd have shown to Ned Kelly, when you thought to shunt him into the hands of Jack Ketch. Mercy—yes, the mercy you showed to your mates. What did they ever do to you, Joss—eh? Did they deserve to be murdered by their pal—eh? Answer me that."

The only answer was a groan.

"Finish the brute!" screamed the excited voices of the more excited listeners. "Lynch him! roast him! scrag him!" were the cries that raged like a tempest round the doomed man.

"Hold!" roared Kelly. "Listen to me," and all were silent as the grave. "He's not good enough for any of those forms of death. True men have been hung, brave men have been burnt, but dogs like Joss don't deserve the cost of a rope or a fire. No, my lads, he shall have a death only fit for such as him. We will lower him over the side and tow him after us as bait for the sharks, whose snouts are now, with true scent, following in our wake, knowing their dinner is preparing, and that death's aboard. We'll just dip him a bit, so that he shan't be gobbled up in a mouthful, but let him lose a leg first, then an arm, just to give him time to enjoy it."

This pleasantry was answered by a terrified shriek, and the poor devil fainted.

In the meantime everything was prepared.

A stout rope was tied round the upper part of his body, his arms and legs being left free.

When he came to, Kelly lifted the man in his powerful arms and carried him screaming to the side of the vessel.

The victim struggled all he knew how, with instinct of self-preservation, and without any hope of release. He felt his last terrible hour had come; what was more, he felt he deserved it.

His whole previous life passed in review before him ; he suffered the pangs of death fifty times over. Verily, "The pains of hell *gat hold upon him.*"

"Ain't I gentle, my baby?" mocked Kelly, as he quietly lowered the shrinking, quivering, trembling body over the side, by which the white-bellied sharks were coursing along their noses rising every minute above the water, as if anticipating the repast that was to fill their open jaws.

Shriek upon shriek issued from the unfortunate victim, as he turned his horrified gaze upon the formidable jaws of the huge beasts, who almost sprung from the waves to snatch the man from the arms that were lowering him to such a fearful and certain death.

Kelly held him with mock tenderness close to himself, laughing wildly and maliciously, as he almost cuddled Joss in his Herculean arms.

Those looking on, *almost* felt compunction, until the thought of the fate he had prepared for them re-awakened their vengeance, and stifled all human feeling.

Suddenly they were startled by a loud and furious curse, and Kelly was seen to grasp the man's throat.

Joss, in his despair and agony, had fixed his powerful teeth in the fleshy part of Kelly's arm, and held on like a tiger.

It was only when almost choked, that his bite relaxed.

Maddened by the pain, Kelly resolved the wretch's fate should not be postponed any longer, and crying out to those holding the tow-rope to "slack off," Joss was flopped into the water, which was soon reddened with blood, while half-a-dozen sharks soon obliterated all earthly sign of the once stalwart Joss.

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